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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A PLANNED CHANGE:
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALBERTA FAMILY POLICY GRID

BY

MARIA JANE MAYAN ©

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE
STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY

IN

FAMILY STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled A PLANNED CHANGE: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALBERTA FAMILY POLICY GRID submitted by MARIA J. MAYAN in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Family Studies.

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DEDICATION

To my parents
Lillian and Morley Mayan

Just as you are proud of me, I am proud of you. You have always encouraged me to speak out and share my ideas. You have never silenced me. You have taken care of my body and cultivated my spirit and mind. Your beliefs and commitment to the education of your daughters has been the greatest gift. Thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement throughout my education.

To my sister and brother-in-law
Kennan and Ben Kunz

You have always cared so deeply. My life is richer through each conversation we share.

To my husband
Tom Pennie

To my graphic designer and proof reader extraordinaire. Thank you for believing in me, being patient with me, carrying me when I was so tired, having a sense of humor, and loving me. You bring so much meaning to my life.

Thank you. I love all of you.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the implementation of the Alberta Family Policy Grid as experienced by middle managers in the Alberta government. The implementation of the Grid was a planned change. The goal of implementing the Grid was to improve the government's family policy-making system.

A conceptual framework was developed. The framework was comprised of seven elements proposed to facilitate a planned change in a government context. The application of these elements to the implementation of the Grid were considered possible facilitators toward the implementation of the Grid in government.

A qualitative approach was employed to study the change process. Specifically, the method of ethnography was used to capture the process of implementation within the culture of the Alberta provincial government. Data for this study were collected primarily by means of face-to-face unstructured interviews. As well, some telephone interviews, documentary analyses and participant-observations were completed. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 18 middle managers, as well as three senior government officials and four other key participants not associated with a particular government department. In addition, 14 telephone interviews were conducted with front-line managers. Furthermore, members of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families were interviewed periodically throughout the study and some the Council's documents were analyzed.

Through the analysis of the findings, factors emerged to describe what hindered the implementation of the Grid. Through further analysis and comparison with the conceptual framework, five of the seven elements of change emerged as most distinct in explaining the actual implementation of the Grid. The Grid as the instrument of change also emerged as significant to understanding implementation. The actual change process is described in the discussion as, "implementation stalemated".

Through additional analysis, two themes emerged to explain overall, what occurred to stalemate the implementation of the Grid. The first theme was the power of senior officials. The participants explained that individuals or groups need to have power if they are to lead or direct a planned change. In addition, the participants explained that power must be shared with the front-line for a planned change for families to be realized. The leader and change agent were not in power-holding positions in government and power was not shared with the front-line, which helps to explain the implementation stalemate. The second theme was the lack of congruence between values. There was a lack of congruence between the values and assumptions of senior officials in the current government and the values and assumptions embedded in the planned change. The clash of values contributed to the stalemate of implementation. It is recommended that an authority structure for families be established and a critical thinking approach to family policy-making in government be encouraged

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

Introduction

> The family is the single greatest influence on our lives, shaping who we are, how we feel about ourselves and how we approach the challenges of life. Government policies, programs and laws play an important part in the lives of individuals and families. Policies must be assessed to ensure that they encourage healthy family functioning and strengthen the capacity of families to meet the needs of their members...The Family Policy Grid provides a framework for departments to use in developing and assessing policies affecting families. (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a, p. 1)

Over the last 30 years, Canadians have chosen family lifestyles that have created diverse familial groups. These choices have resulted in later marriages, smaller families, open adoptions, gay and lesbian families, child-free families, the use of new reproductive technologies, an increase in divorce and single-parent families, and so forth (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992c; Eichler, 1988). The environment in which these diverse familial groups live is also rapidly changing. This challenging ecology for family life strains family well-being and creates the need for social support, which has significant implications for governments.

Several groups have been pressuring governments to act in more systematic and direct fashions to meet the various needs of families (Edgar, 1988; Edwards & Snyder, 1988; Kamerman & Kahn, 1976). These demands have caused governments to speak out on family issues, articulate commitment, and go beyond mere promises to act on behalf of families.

In Canada, governments are acknowledging family stability and family well-being as issues demanding some form of action (Kieren, 1991). In 1989, McDaniel noted that a central issue in every Canadian election has been the needs of families, although the focus of the latest elections in Canada has shifted to deficit issues. In the United States, family well-being was listed as one of the top national priorities for the 1990's (Langley, 1991). Although not a government, the United Nations recognized the need to act for families by designating 1994 as the "International Year of the Family." Thus, although deficit issues are the focus of most current governments, they also have acknowledged their role in working with families. However, governments have acted out this role in a variety of ways, which often have resulted in unintended impacts, contradictory policies, and limited attention to the diverse types of families.

In 1992, the Alberta government developed a family policy framework. This framework was a policy on policy-making or what Dror (1968) terms a metapolicy. A metapolicy is unique in that it is an umbrella policy that "establishes overall principles and rules for policy-making" (Dror, 1968, p. 164). With these principles and rules, a metapolicy establishes boundaries while allowing policy-makers to adjust to novel problems and changing political and social conditions (Dror, 1968, 1971). A metapolicy also outlines the domain of issues, or what can and cannot be considered a policy issue (Hinings & Greenwood, 1988). Furthermore, because a metapolicy is designed to improve the quality of policy-making, it can be considered "the most important level of policy sciences" (Dror, 1971, p. 280). The government called its metapolicy the Alberta Family Policy Grid, also referred to as the Family Policy Grid or the Grid. The Grid is illustrated in Appendix A.

Specifically, the Grid was a statement of eight principles that were to be used to develop and assess policies affecting Alberta families and increase the government's sensitivity to how its policies impact on family well-being. The Grid's central question is "will this policy be supportive and encouraging toward Alberta families?" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a, p.1). The intent was to bring all legislation, policies, programs, and administrative activities of government in line with the principles reflected in the Grid.

Statement of the Problem

The development of the Family Policy Grid was orchestrated by the Alberta government. The Grid's implementation was an example of a planned change; it was "a conscious, deliberate, and collaborative effort to improve how a system currently operates" (Bennis, Benne, & Chin, 1985, p. 4). The goal of this planned change was to improve the government's family policy-making system. The Alberta government determined that policy-makers should assess all current and proposed government policies for their impact on families in order to improve its policies for families and, ultimately, provide better support to families. This goal, which was to be realized through the implementation of the Family Policy Grid, involved a significant change in the process of government policy-making.

Implementing a major change in government is very complex. Numerous factors exist within a government that can affect how a change unfolds. Thus, this study was designed to discover and document the process involved in implementing the Family Policy Grid within the context of the Alberta provincial government.

Research Question

One question was developed to track the implementation of the Grid and document the change process: "What is the nature of the process of implementation of the Family Policy Grid as experienced by middle management?"

Initially, I wanted to take a broad perspective and interview senior officials, middle managers, and front-line workers about their experiences implementing the Grid. As the study evolved, it became apparent that middle managers were most familiar and had the most experience with the Grid. I made the decision to focus on middle managers, and thus, I narrowed the research question by including "as experienced by middle management." The interviews conducted with senior officials and front-line managers provided data that were compared with the data provided by the interviews with middle managers.

Background to the Problem

The implementation of the Grid throughout the Alberta government involved a complicated change process. Three factors identified in the literature further complicated the process of implementation: taking implementation for granted, the nature of government, and past attempts at supportive initiatives for families.

Taking Implementation for Granted

The policy implementation process is important because it translates a policy into outcomes and impacts. However, to public administrators and to some scholars, implementation is often a taken-for-granted process. Public administrators may take policy implementation for granted because it is commonly assumed that once a policy is developed, implementation will automatically result (Fox, 1987). This attitude has lead to a conceptual separation of policy development and implementation and has resulted in a neglect of policy implementation (Golembiewski, 1987). In addition, public administrators may take implementation for granted because of the difficulty of managing the numerous factors that affect the implementation process and influence its eventual success or failure (Alexander, 1985). Taking implementation for granted is evident in the management of the public sector. Those trained in public management have a strong orientation toward the development of public policy but not toward implementation (Golembiewski, 1987).

Consequently, it is likely that individuals responsible for implementing the Grid would not have given a great deal of attention to the implementation process, and they would not have had the experience necessary to manage the factors that could affect its implementation. Thus, taking implementation for granted in the past complicated the process and contributed to the challenge of implementing the Grid.

Before the late 1970's, many scholars also took the implementation process for granted. Instead of studying implementation, policy studies traditionally concentrated on two domains: policy development and policy evaluation (Fox, 1987; Golembiewski, 1987; Hoogerwerf, 1990).

The interest in implementation in the 1970's occurred when researchers, lead by individuals such as Pressman, Wildvasky and O'Toole discovered that many policies failed for reasons related to their implementation and not to problems inherent in the policies themselves (Linder & Peters, 1990). The gradual increase in implementation research since the 1970's has been developing into a significant body of research. However, compared to the research on policy development and evaluation, policy implementation research is still in its infancy. It is evident from the calls for implementation research in the 1990's that huge gaps remain in our knowledge of the implementation process (Linder & Peters, 1990).

Accordingly, the lack of research on implementation in comparison to development and evaluation complicated the implementation of the Grid. The implementation research did not provide implementers with a clear picture of how the implementation of a metapolicy, like the Grid, might occur in the Alberta government or what factors might influence or derail this process. Furthermore, since scholars typically concentrated on policy development and evaluation research over implementation research, public administrators may have also concentrated on policy development and evaluation and thus, taken policy implementation for granted.

Consequently, taking implementation for granted created an overall policy-making climate that did not encourage officials to invest time and energy in this stage of the policy process. Therefore, taking implementation for granted became both part of the background and an obstacle to implementing the Grid throughout the Alberta government.

The Nature of Government

The nature of government, characterized by its size, bureaucracy, heterogeneity, and political features makes implementing any major change complex. The size of government is believed to be one of the biggest obstacles to implementing a change in government (Downs, 1967; Goodsell, 1983; Graber, 1992). As an organization increases in size, there is an increase in its "specialization of functions, personnel and formal control systems," which act to constrain the facilitation of a planned change (Hinings & Greenwood, 1988, p. 45). The number of departments as well as divisions within these departments makes coordinating and communicating change very difficult. Thompson (1980) summarizes it best by asking, "What do you do with the many hands in bureaucracy?" Furthermore, a large organization usually has a large bureaucracy with strongly entrenched policies and practices (Daft, 1992).

Government bureaucracy is characterized by: a) a high division of labor, with each employee being assigned a specific and clear task to perform; b) the standardization of work practices, which ensures that duties are performed in a predictable, routine manner; c) the formalization of rules and documentation, which describes, in written form, behaviors and activities; and d) the centralization of hierarchically located authority, which operates as a mechanism for supervision and control (Daft, 1992; Hinings & Greenwood, 1988). These characteristics deter interdependency, communication, and teamwork among and within departments. The strong vertical barriers discourage sharing goals, management processes, and decision-making. In contrast, the implementation of the Grid relied on highly interactive, interdependent, communicative relationships. Under these circumstances, the implementation of the Grid was bound to be a difficult, complex process.

Government is also a very heterogeneous organization, identified through a number of very diverse departments that differ according to their goals, specialization, resources, and power. The heterogeneity in government means that each department basically pursues its own interests, which are often incongruent with the interests of other departments. Wilson (1972) concludes that the greater the diversity of an organization, the less chance that an innovative change will be adopted. Furthermore, the interplay between heterogeneity, or the pursuit of various interests, and interdependence, or the pressure to have highly interactive relationships, sets the stage for conflict (Langhorn & Hinings, 1987). Heterogeneity makes it difficult to obtain agreement on the need for a change and how to accomplish a change. Given the heterogeneous nature of government, it was expected that the implementation of the Grid, in the Alberta government, would be a complex process.

Furthermore, implementing a change in government is complicated because the process is political. Implementing a change is political because individuals with power choose among values to support, which in turn, determines the priorities and direction of government. Simply put, implementation of the Grid depended on how individuals with power perceived the Grid and whether or not they considered it a priority of government. This political environment of a government can be an obstacle of implementing a new policy. Therefore, the nature of government, characterized as large, bureaucratic, heterogeneous, and political, can create a relatively inhospitable context for a major change to policy-making for families.

Past Attempts at Supportive Initiatives for Families

The attempts by governments to respond to the changes in families over the last three decades, through initiatives and policies, have been less than exemplary and have been criticized for failing to act on behalf of families. For example, in the United States, the 1980 White House

Conference on the Family focused on specific issues of concern to family, but it was denounced because it failed to develop a workable policy program (Steiner, 1981).

In Canada, provincial governments also have tried to show their support for families. For example, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland have created special government foundations, institutes, or councils for families (Mayan, 1992). British Columbia and Quebec have both named a separate Minister responsible for families. Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, North West Territories, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island have acknowledged families by specifically creating a family service department or a family division within an existing department (Mayan, 1992). Most provinces and both of the territories have named Secretariats or Advisory Councils responsible for youth, seniors, and women, and within the scope of their mandates, these secretariats and councils are expected to act indirectly for families (Mayan, 1992). However, in spite of all these Canadian initiatives, few have resulted in direct and sustained support for families.

Quebec is the only province that has acted directly, with particular success, to develop an initiative that supports families. The declining birth and marriage rates, an increase in divorce and common-law marriages, and an increase of mothers in the labor force prompted the Quebec government to adopt a family policy for the province (Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1994). In 1987, the Quebec government established a strong administrative structure to act for families. A Minister responsible for the family was appointed, a Secretariat on the Family was established to provide the Minister with services required to implement family policy within the government, and an Advisory Council on the Family was set up to act as a liaison between the community and government and to formulate constructive criticism of the initiatives proposed by government (Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1994). These administrative structures are still in place.

Since 1988, the Quebec government has proposed three action plans. These action plans have resulted in changes to the minimum labour standards for working parents and a birth allowance for each child born into the family. They have focused on a series of preventative measures dealing with prenatal care, teenage pregnancy, violence in the family, adoption, and new reproductive technologies. They have included strategies to reconcile work and family and there has been an emphasis on involving municipal and community actors in promoting a family orientation throughout the whole of society (Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1994).

The Quebec family policy is not without criticism. It has been primarily criticized as a pro-natalist policy designed to promote procreation rather than to provide support for individuals who become parents (Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1994). However, the progress the Quebec government has made toward providing support for families is exemplary and cannot be dismissed.

The International Year of the Family brought more attention to family concerns and the need to provide support for families. In 1993, the Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family developed a document entitled "The Need for a Policy on the Family in Municipal Governments." This document was recommended to municipal governments, but implementation was left to the discretion of these governments. I contacted two municipal governments in Alberta, and as of August, 1995, this document has not prompted any action by these two municipal governments.

The 1994 International Year of the Family sparked world-wide meetings about families. The Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family was involved in a wide range of activities that were directed toward "increasing awareness of the contribution made by families to Canadian society and enhancing understanding of the issues faced by Canadian families" (Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family, 1995, p. 1). In January, 1995, this Committee made two major recommendations to the federal government regarding how it could provide support for families. It called for the establishment of a Federal Secretariat for the Family and a nongovernmental National Family Policy Organization (Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family, 1995). The Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family was disbanded in April, 1995, and the likelihood that these organizations will be established is questionable.

In 1995, the government of New Brunswick established a Family Policy Secretariat and in September, 1995, it released a policy framework similar to the Alberta Family Policy Grid. It is too early to note the progress of New Brunswick's policy framework. Also in 1995, two governments, one in Belgium and the other in Ireland requested members of the Premier's Council visit to assist them in setting up Councils for the Family and to introduce the Grid to their governments.

These examples demonstrate that governments have the desire to develop strategies to deal with the needs of families. This desire is encouraging, but it is only valuable if these plans and initiatives effectively deal with the needs of families. A great deal can be learned from the province of Quebec; for instance, how it established specific structures responsible for families and targeted and addressed certain family issues. However, to date, the family policy arena is haphazard and even contradictory in the support it provides for families.

Both the need for and the obstacles to implementing initiatives for families is demonstrated by the past attempts and planned future attempts at moving toward supportive initiatives for families. Past attempts demonstrate how difficult it is for governments, which would include the Alberta government, to develop and implement initiatives that will meet the needs of families.

Significance

The purpose of this study was to document and analyze the implementation of the Alberta Family Policy Grid. In particular it focused on the factors that affected the process of change and the implementers' behaviour toward or away from implementing the Grid. The results of such an inquiry have the potential of clarifying concepts related to and affecting the implementation of family policies. Such conceptual clarification can refine our theoretical understanding of the implementation process. Understanding the factors that influence the nature of implementation is important to a theory of policy implementation in general, but these factors can also add, more specifically, to a theory of policy implementation in a government context.

In addition, such clarification should ultimately shape the manner in which government designs policy initiatives. Policy-makers might be able to better manage the factors that block implementation in a government context. Policy-makers might be more likely to anticipate implementation difficulties and incorporate both preventative and problem-solving strategies into the implementation process. The specific delineation of implementation during a major change in government leadership will also be useful. The likelihood is increased that policy-makers will be able to design planned changes for families congruent with the culture and context in which they will be implemented. Thus, the results of this research might make it easier for policy-makers to manage a planned change in government.

Finally, and most importantly, the results of this study might indirectly benefit families. As scholars continue to conduct research on planned change and focus on improving policies for families in a government context, there is a chance for greater awareness of family needs and the development of strategies for meeting these needs. As a result of implementation research, policy-makers might become more sensitive to the management of the policy-making process for families, which might result in more direct and intended policy impacts on families. These activities by scholars and policy-makers have the potential to benefit families.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, six key terms were defined.

Family Policy

A policy is designed when there is a problem to address or a discrepancy between a current and desired state. A policy is a decision regarding the pursuit of a desired state or a specific goal or value (Zimmerman, 1988). Family policy, then, is a decision regarding the pursuit of a goal or value specifically related to families. The purpose of making these decisions and of designing family policies is to improve the quality of life in families (Zimmerman, 1992). Family policy should not be restricted to one particular type of family, but it should address all forms of families across the life-span (Kamerman & Kahn, 1978).

Family Policy-Making

Family policy-making is a comprehensive process that includes developing the policy, implementing it, and evaluating its effects. Improving family policy-making includes improving the processes of policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

Implementation

The familiar definition of implementation is the act of "carrying out" or "putting into effect" a policy; it is what occurs *after* a policy has been developed (my emphasis) (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989). In this research, implementation consisted of planning for implementation or "setting the stage" for implementation, and it occurred while the Grid was being developed. Implementation involved organizing who was to receive the Grid, who was to implement it, when, and under what conditions. Therefore, implementation in this study is defined as "setting the stage" for the introduction of the Grid as well as the activities involved in putting the Grid into effect after it was developed.

Government

The term "government" refers to the Alberta provincial government. Although using this term is analytically convenient, it is important to note that the term is not used to personify government. The term "government" is used to represent the numerous individuals who make decisions and take actions within government.

Senior Officials

The term “Senior officials” refers to the Premier, Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Assistant Deputy Ministers. In some cases, the Premier is referred to separately and in these cases, senior officials refers to Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Assistant Deputy Ministers.

Middle Managers

The term “Middle managers” refers to the individuals with the following titles: Executive Manager, Executive Director, Manager, Director, Assistant Director, Consultant, and Policy Analyst.

Front-line Workers

The term “Front-line workers” or “Front-line managers” refers to the individuals responsible for the direct delivery of services to families.

Delimitations

This study focuses on one stage of the implementation process as viewed primarily by middle managers within the Alberta provincial government. In addition, input from senior officials and front-line managers was gathered to clarify and contrast the comments made by middle managers. This study does not include if and how the Grid was implemented by nongovernmental agencies or community groups who might have applied the Grid to their work. As well, the study focuses on implementation alone. The impact of the Grid on family life was not explored. The stages of development, evaluation, and impact are discussed only as they relate to the implementation process.

My Interest in the Study

I have always been fascinated by the relationships between and among family members. These relationships are some of the most profound and influential an individual ever experiences. However, the stresses experienced by individuals in today's families make it difficult for families to establish and maintain healthy relationships and live and stay together. I believe government has a role in making family life easier and better.

I am also intrigued by government. The responsibilities of government and how government manages these responsibilities intrigue me most. More specifically, governments have certain responsibilities to their citizens, but what these responsibilities are and the extent to which they are provided are open to debate. I welcome being part of this debate, especially when it concerns governments' responsibilities to families.

My fascination with families and interest in government led me to complete a practicum placement at The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families in 1991. During this time, the Council was developing the Grid and planning for its implementation. In response to these activities, I began to question if and how the Grid would be used and by whom. This initial questioning, coupled with my belief in governments' responsibilities to provide support to families, compelled me to set forth to study the implementation of the Grid.

Chapter Two:

The Conceptual Framework:

Implementing the Grid in a Government Context

Introduction

Skepticism about the effectiveness of government is a major theme throughout the public administration literature. In general, this literature suggests that government is said to be bent on maintaining stability, determined to keep real power in traditional hands, and opposed to meaningful change (Goodsell, 1983). However, government is not immutable to change and these criticisms about government are argued (Milward & Rainey, 1983).

To identify how a planned change might be realized in a government context, a conceptual framework was developed. A conceptual framework is a theoretical model that a researcher develops to show the relationships among concepts for a particular study (Field & Morse, 1985). This conceptual framework is a theoretical model that identifies the elements that could facilitate the implementation of the Grid in the Alberta government and how the three obstacles (taking implementation for granted, the nature of government, and previous disappointing attempts at supportive initiatives for families) to implementing the Grid might be managed. The elements are: Naming a change agent, Securing leadership, Planning the change, Convincing of the need for the change, Building commitment, Communicating, and Choosing incremental change. The conceptual framework formatted by these seven elements was developed through a review of selected business and public administration literature describing planned change. The conceptual framework of policy implementation is illustrated best using a web figure.

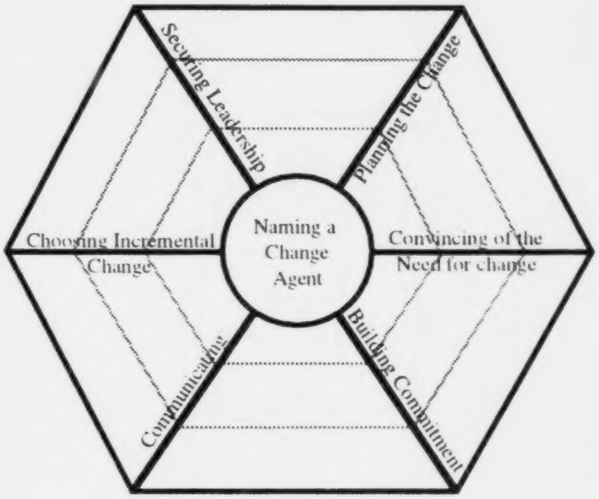

Securing Leadership
Planning the Change
Choosing Incremental Change
Naming a Change Agent
Convincing of the Need for change
Communicating
Building Commitment

Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework: Elements to Facilitate a Planned Change

Webs are made up of a hub and strong support threads, or radii, that extend from the hub. In this figure, the hub represents the element Naming a Change Agent. The change agent is depicted in the hub of the web because of its central and influential role in the implementation process and its relationship with all the other elements. A change agent is responsible for directing and guiding a planned change, and thus, it is ultimately responsible for the realization of a planned change.

The radii represent the other elements necessary for facilitating a planned change. The radii are interdependent and intricately woven to create the web. The radii in the web represent the elements necessary to initiate and maintain a planned change in government. The broken lines between the radii represent the connectedness and interdependency between the elements. Thus, through the change agent (hub), all of the elements (radii), are dynamic and fluid and depend on each other to achieve a real change. The following is a more detailed explanation of each element in the conceptual framework.

The Conceptual Framework

Naming A Change Agent

A change agent is an individual or group, a "vehicle" (Kanter, 1984), that is responsible for managing a planned change. A change agent has a very important role. It is a change agent's ultimate responsibility to involve others and work with others in order to achieve the goals of a planned change (Benveniste, 1989). A change agent plays many roles: designer, pragmatist, catalyst, process helper, expert in organizational change, doer, and so forth. (Conner & Lake, 1988; Mohrman & Mohrman, 1989). A change agent must also respond to various verbal opinions that might support or oppose the change. Furthermore, a change agent must not only introduce a planned change, but it must monitor a change so that it is not simply started and then abandoned.

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, referred to as the Premier's Council or the Council, was the change agent responsible for directing the development as well as managing the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. The former Premier established, appointed, and named the Premier's Council.

Securing Leadership

Of the many elements in the literature considered to be important to facilitate a planned change, one of the most mentioned is the role of leadership (Gagliardi, 1986; Jacques, 1987; Mohrman, Ledford, & Mohrman, 1989; Nadler & Tushman, 1989; Tichy & Ulrich, 1984; Tushman & Romanelli, 1985). The roles of a leader and a change agent are different. The role of a leader is symbolic; whereas, the role of a change agent is to directly manage day-to-day activities and events. The role of a leader is to envision or embody the planned change (Kaufman, 1991). Leadership is needed in a planned change to create a vision, build coalitions of people committed to the vision, energize these people, and ensure that an organization's capability to handle the change keeps in step with the demands of the change (Belasco, 1990; Hinings, Brown, & Greenwood, 1991; Mohrman, Ledford, & Mohrman, 1989; Nadler & Tushman, 1989).

Because implementation in government is so complex, it is necessary to have leadership that will encourage individuals involved with a planned change to move toward the change. Without leadership, implementers can become weary of a change and lose sight of its purpose and vision. With no one to energize them or keep them on track, a planned change can go astray.

Thus securing the appropriate leadership, for which a change agent is responsible, is necessary for facilitating a planned change.

Planning the Change

Planning a change, represented by a radius in the web, is important because planning involves conscious, deliberate, and intended ways to bring about change (Bennis, Benne, & Chin, 1985). Planning a change is the translation of ideas into definite action (Schein, 1985). It is planning how to approach issues and solve problems. Therefore, “planning has two aspects: to forecast the future, thereby reducing uncertainty in the operation of an organization; and to produce a set of objectives and an associated pattern of activity to achieve them" (Langhorn & Hinings, 1987, p. 556). Hence, planning a change is not adapting to a situation nor is it change that occurs haphazardly; instead, it is the conscious application of social knowledge to determine the best means to bring about a change (Bennis, Benne, & Chin, 1985). Consequently, planning a change also involves identifying who will be involved in and affected by a change and including these people and informing them about the change process at appropriate times and in appropriate ways. Planning is never finished. It is a continual process of communicating, participating, learning, making mistakes and responding (Benveniste, 1989).

Planning a change is also political decision-making. It is understanding and making decisions based on the political setting that influences change in government. People often become disgruntled with the policy planning process in government because they fail to recognize its inherently political nature (Langhorn & Hinings, 1987). Therefore, a change agent needs to continually recognize, plan, and make decisions about the intended change based on the political setting of government.

Convincing of the Need for the Change

Another extremely important element needed to facilitate a planned change in government is to ensure that individuals involved with the change are convinced of the need or the reason for the change. Individuals must consider the need or reason for the change as legitimate. Convincing of the need involves explaining the idea and rationales underlying a change and how the change fits with the organization (Hinings, Brown, & Greenwood, 1991). Individuals are convinced by accepting these ideas and rationales as valid. Thus, convincing individuals is extremely important because "the need for the change must be felt by the people whose energy is required for the change to happen" (Barrett & Cammann, 1984, p. 10). The change agent is responsible for convincing individuals involved in the change, in this case, both senior officials and bureaucrats, of the need for the change.

Building Commitment

Building commitment in those individuals involved in a change is another element necessary to facilitate a planned change. In government, it is necessary to gain the commitment of senior officials and bureaucrats for a planned change. The commitment of senior officials is important because introducing a planned change in government is political. It is political because power is used (Benveniste, 1989). Power is generally found among senior officials who have the greatest access to resources. Power is used to favor certain groups and choose between certain values. Thus, the power held by senior officials carries with it the ability to determine public policy and the overall priorities of government (Benveniste, 1989; Garand, 1985; Goodsell, 1983; Grindle & Thomas, 1989; Kernaghan & Siegel, 1987). This power might be used to implement a change or, on the other hand, defend the status quo and cling to past practices.

It is important to have the commitment of bureaucrats because they are the individuals actually responsible for implementing policies designed by senior officials. According to some researchers, it is necessary to invite those who will be receiving and implementing a change to participate in a planned change in order to build commitment to the change (Drucker, 1973; Jacques, 1987; Kirkpatrick, 1985; Medina, 1982; Reiner, 1987).

Thus, building commitment to a planned change is accomplished by involving people in the decision-making and problem-solving processes. By requesting opinions and inputs regarding a planned change, both senior officials and bureaucrats may come to feel ownership of and responsibility for the change, which significantly improves the chance of a successful implementation (Benveniste, 1989; Greiner, 1967; Kanter, 1984; Kirkpatrick, 1985; Medina, 1982). On the other hand, if individuals are not involved in the planned change, they might feel it is unsuitable and resist and eventually derail the planned change (Benveniste, 1989).

Becoming involved in a planned change establishes a sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment to a planned change and these psychological connections help motivate the people who create the mechanisms necessary to produce effective results (Kanter, 1984). The merit of involvement in a planned change is that it generates concrete ideas, shares power, connects people to the decisions that affect them, and brings their knowledge to bear on the problem (Kanter, 1984). As a result of involving senior officials and bureaucrats in the decision-making process, decisions are legitimized (Benveniste, 1989). Consequently, a change agent needs to create opportunities to build commitment to a change.

Communicating

Communication is "by far the most important element contributing to the success" of a planned change (Lippitt, Langseth, & Mossop, 1985, p. 111). Communication can be defined as creating understanding (Kirkpatrick, 1985), and it should be considered the backbone to facilitating a planned change.

Communication involves continually communicating with those involved in the change as well as anyone else who is interested in the change (Kirkpatrick, 1985). It includes imagining the possible changes in structure, activities, and current work practices that might result from a planned change and then communicating these to others in order to prepare them for the change (Hinings, Brown, & Greenwood, 1991). Communication also needs to be interactive; implementers of the change must feel free to ask questions and/or make suggestions to the change agent.

Communication can exist in a variety of forms, including office memos, weekly plans, and celebrations of successfully achieved milestones in the planned change (Belasco, 1990; Lippitt, Langseth, & Mossop, 1985). Communication, in its many forms, is important because problems can arise, changes can be resisted, and rumors can be generated when people are not kept fully informed throughout a planned change.

Considering the importance of communication, it is still "often neglected in management, and administrators do not always devote the necessary time to that task" (Jacques, 1987, p. 188). Therefore, it would be expected that a change agent would create and maintain high levels of communication with every one involved in a planned change.

Choosing Incremental Change

Change can be either incremental or radical. Change that is introduced on a small scale and implemented at times and places deemed most appropriate by the change agent so that change eventually spreads and is accepted throughout the organization is called incremental change (Kimberly, 1981). In contrast, radical change occurs in all parts of the organization at one time. A change agent instituting a radical change does not wait for the most appropriate times and places to introduce a change.

Both approaches to change have merits, but generally, the choice of an approach is dictated by the circumstances of the planned change.

Choosing an incremental approach is most appropriate when the planned change is to occur in a heterogeneous organization, such as government. A change agent may be able to effectively manage various departments' interests and possible resistance to a planned change if it is introduced in an incremental or slow and non-threatening manner (Kimberly, 1981). A change agent can introduce a change in the way and at the time most appropriate to reflect the interests and needs of various departments.

Furthermore, the necessity for an incremental change increases as the size of an organization increases (Hinings & Greenwood, 1988). A large organization, such as government, is internally complex, and a change agent needs to coordinate its time, resources, and knowledge in order to implement a change (Benveniste, 1989; Quinn, 1978). If a planned change is introduced across a large, internally complex organization simultaneously, monitoring the change becomes extremely difficult.

In addition, incremental change within government "is the actual mode of decision-making due to the realities of political behaviour among government departments" (Langhorn & Hinings, 1987, p. 557). Thus, the politics of planning and decision-making that accompany a planned change in government need to be managed with political “know-how.” Through incremental change, a change agent can manage the complexity of change by taking the time to think through alternatives and make political decisions in a “conscious,” “deliberate,” and “collaborative” manner (Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1985). Thus, selecting an incremental approach allows a change agent to carefully weigh political decisions about implementing a policy change.

Finally, incremental change fits with all of the other elements necessary for facilitating a planned change. By introducing a planned change as an incremental change, a change agent can sufficiently and effectively: plan the change, secure leadership, convince of the need for the change, build commitment to the change, and consistently communicate.

The Interdependency of the Elements

The conceptual framework depicted by the web figure presents seven elements, discussed in the planned change literature, all of which are interconnected and significant for understanding how the government might facilitate the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. In order to facilitate a planned change, it is necessary to understand how these elements are interconnected and how they interact. For example, naming a change agent is related to all other elements because the change agent is responsible for planning the change and ensuring that all of these elements are employed during a planned change (i.e., securing leadership, convincing of the need for the change, building commitment, communicating, and choosing incremental change). The element of securing leadership assists in convincing of the need for change and building commitment to the change. High levels of communication are also needed to convince others that the change is needed and to build commitment to the change. Furthermore, planning for a change is futile unless the plans are communicated. Incremental change describes how the entire planned change should unfold. Incremental change works best in a heterogeneous, large, political organization such as government and, as mentioned previously, fits with the rest of the elements in the framework. These few examples demonstrate how elements in the conceptual framework are interrelated and interdependent and illustrate the organizational capacity necessary to implement the Family Policy Grid in the Alberta government.

The conceptual framework was useful throughout this research because it provided a guide for conducting the study. As a guide, it helped to structure data collection and analysis, and served as a means to make sense and find patterns among voluminous data. As Yin (1981) suggests, the difficulty of writing a research project may be reduced if the study is built on a clear conceptual framework. Chapter Six, the discussion, is built around the conceptual framework. The participants' comments describing how the elements were revealed during the implementation of the Grid is the focus of this discussion.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

The aim of this study was to understand the nature of the process of implementation from the perspective of middle management having various experiences with the Grid. The research paradigm most appropriate for studying this process was a qualitative approach.

A qualitative approach is used to explore the subjective experiences of people in their everyday lives. The essence of a qualitative approach is to understand the meaning or the interpretation people have of the rules, issues, and behaviour of their culture (Field & Morse, 1985). This means that problems are addressed from the emic perspective. In this research, the emic perspective was obtained by asking individuals involved with the Grid about their experiences implementing the Grid. Through analyzing their experiences, the factors that influenced the Grid's implementation could be identified.

This chapter describes the qualitative inquiry into the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. It provides a detailed account of data collection and analysis processes and the ethical guidelines employed in this research. It outlines how the ultimate goal to treat the data fairly, "to produce compelling analytic conclusions, and to rule out alternative interpretations" was accomplished (Yin, 1989, p. 113).

A Qualitative Inquiry into the Implementation of the Grid

A qualitative approach is most appropriately employed when the purpose of the research is to describe a phenomenon about which little is known (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Field & Morse, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Very little research exists on the implementation process of a metapolicy across government.

Furthermore, because little was known about this topic, information was gathered using an inductive approach. With an inductive approach, "you are not putting together a puzzle whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture that takes shape as you collect and examine the parts" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 32). The picture of the implementation of the Family Policy Grid was slowly shaped as data were collected.

A qualitative approach is also appropriate when the research question focuses, not on an outcome nor a product, but on a process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The research question in this study was aimed at discovering the nature of the implementation process. It was not aimed at concluding whether or not the Grid was implemented, instead, it was aimed at understanding how implementation was unfolding and the factors that affected this process.

It is also essential to use a qualitative approach when it is important to capture the meaning behind behaviour. Behaviour consists of the actions that are meaningful to those who perform the behaviour (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). The participants described how their thoughts and ideas were translated into daily activities and interactions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 31). Capturing meaning is difficult because most often people are oblivious to the taken-for-granted assumptions of everyday life that influence their behaviour (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Why people choose particular behaviours in certain situations is rarely examined.

In order to capture meaning, data were collected in the form of feelings, behaviour, thoughts, insights and actions, (Bailey, 1985) not in the form of numbers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). It was important to understand how those working with the Grid in everyday life, made sense out of what they were doing and why they were doing it.

Therefore, to fully understand implementation behaviour, the meaning which participants gave to their behaviour, within the context of government, had to be interpreted (Erickson, 1986). The ability to interpret meaning allows behaviour to be made intelligible (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Through interpretation, an intelligible and workable understanding of the implementation of the Grid, as it was experienced by the participants, was revealed (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). By presenting this "intelligible" and "workable" interpretation, people who read this account may recognize and thus, challenge some of the “taken-for-granteds” inherent in their behaviour.

Methods

Ethnography

Researchers have the choice among many different qualitative methods to capture meaning. The method employed in this study was ethnography. "Doing ethnography" is writing about people and their daily lives (Fetterman, 1989; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). It is understanding how people of a culture organize their behaviour, not by studying people, but by learning from people (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985). Ethnography is the process of focusing on behaviour to discover a group's way of life or a pattern of behaviour within their culture (Agar, 1980; Fetterman, 1989; Field & Morse, 1985; Harris, 1968; Shimahara, 1988). Therefore, an ethnographer looks for patterns of behaviour by theorizing and thus, developing or confirming explanations of how a phenomenon exists (Fetterman, 1989; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

The method of ethnography was used to discover the extremely rich organizational culture of the provincial government. The culture of the government can be observed through the numerous symbols, ceremonies, artifacts and even dress codes (Daft, 1992). For example, the most evident example of culture can be observed each day when the legislature is in session; the sergeant-at-arms carries the mace into the chamber, a short prayer is said by the speaker and thus, the daily routine begins (Alberta Teachers Association, 1994).

However, there are parts of a culture that cannot be observed. These are the underlying values and assumptions that evolve into patterned sets of activities, behaviours and social interactions (Schein, 1990). These patterns can be used to interpret a culture. Thus, the point of employing ethnography in this research was to explain how implementation of the Grid was occurring within the culture of government.

Ethnography is not only a process, but is also a product (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The ethnographic product is a "reconstruction" or "interpretation" of a pattern of behaviour of those implementing the Family Policy Grid (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Those in government reading the ethnographic account should be able to recognize and relate to the interpretation, thereby better understanding the family policy-making context of government and possibly forming their own ideas for future action on behalf of families.

Ethnography as a process leads the way to discovering a pattern of implementation behaviour. This ethnography as a final product results in a picture of the patterns of implementation behaviour as they occurred within the culture of government.

Data Collection

Ethnographers use documents, archival records, interviews, observations, participant-observations and physical artifacts to collect data (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Yin, 1989). Data for this study were collected primarily by means of unstructured, face-to-face interviews, as well as some telephone interviews, documentary analyses and participant-observations.

Data collection was divided into three parts. The first part included interviews and participant-observations with the Premier's Council and analysis of some of its documents. The second part included interviews with participants from various government departments, with other key participants both within and outside of government who had experience with the Grid, and telephone interviews with front-line workers who delivered family policies. The third part involved final interviews and participant-observations with the Premier's Council, which concluded data collection. Although the method of data collection in a qualitative study flows according to the theoretical needs of the study, the data for this study were primarily collected in this sequence, detailed in Figure 3.1.

Sampling.

A qualitative researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon. Therefore, samples in qualitative research depend on appropriateness and adequacy, rather than probability and size (Morse, 1986). When choosing a qualitative sample, the researcher acknowledges that some members of a group have different information than others due to their roles, status, past experiences, and so forth (Douglas, 1976; Morse, 1986). Therefore, non-probability or purposive sampling was involved in this study.

The participants were chosen “purposefully” based on their different experiences or knowledge and according to the "theoretical needs and direction of the research" (Fetterman, 1989; Field & Morse, 1985; Morse, 1986, p. 184). Purposive sampling was also employed to review documents. Documents that provided a background to the development of the Grid and the plans for implementation were reviewed.

Figure 3.1: Data Collection

Part One: Obtaining the Background to the Implementation of the Grid

Interviews
- Premier's Council Staff

Documents
- Premier's Council's Written Materials

Participant-Observations
- Attending meetings, social functions and working on site at the Premier's Council

Part Two: Hearing About Participants' Experiences with the Grid

Interviews

Face-to-Face Interviews: Provincial Government Departments

	Department A	Department B...*
Stage 1	Senior Officials and Middle Managers	Senior Officials and Middle Managers
Stage 2	Other participants that addressed the theoretical needs of the study	

Telephone Interviews: Provincial Government Departments

	Department A	Department B...*
Stage 3	Front line manager(s)	Front line manager(s)

Part Three: Gathering Final Data on the Implementation Process

Interviews
- Premier's Council Staff

Participant-Observations
- Attending meetings at the Premier's Council

*Data collection continued until the process of implementation was captured.

Furthermore, a choice had to be made among the departments from which to choose the participants. To make this choice, a certain type of purposive sampling was employed called maximum variation sampling. Choosing a maximum variation sampling strategy is appropriate to discover a pattern within a very heterogeneous population (Patton, 1990). Because the Grid was being implemented within the heterogeneity of government, across all of its departments, it was important to chose departments that mirrored this heterogeneity.

Interviews.

Interviews were conducted using a general interview guide (Patton, 1990). The guide was developed by outlining the issues that were to be explored and by writing some general questions. The interview guide technique was chosen because it ensured that all relevant topics were covered, while enabling the researcher to build a conversation by adapting the interview to each situation and participant (Patton, 1990). Therefore, a guide kept the interaction focused, making the best use of the limited interview time available, while permitting individual perspectives and meanings to surface (Patton, 1990).

Interviews began in March, 1994 and were completed in November, 1994. Six face-to-face interviews were conducted with staff from the Premier's Council, three with senior government officials, and 18 with middle managers from ten different government departments. Four other face-to-face interviews were conducted with key participants not associated with one particular government department, but that had experience with the Grid and that addressed the theoretical needs of the study. Face-to-face interviews totaled 25 and lasted approximately one hour, but ranged from about thirty minutes to two hours. Six follow-up telephone calls were made to some of the participants to ask further questions and clarify some of their responses.

All of the 25 participants, except three, participated following my initial request to be interviewed. The three participants were suggested by senior officials who had taken my initial requests for interviews but declined to participate. They indicated a lack of time and/or familiarity with the Grid.

In addition to the 25 face-to-face interviews, 14 telephone interviews were conducted with front-line managers from the same ten government departments, to discover whether the implementation of Grid had extended to front line people who managed the direct delivery of services to families. Overall, I found most of the participants to very well-spoken and expressive.

The Premier's Council categorized departments into three groups: low, medium, and high. This categorization was based on the perceived impact of the work of departments on families. For example, the low category represented departments that were perceived to be low in the degree to which their work impacted families and the high category represented departments that were perceived to be high in the degree to which their work impacted families.

The departments categorized as low in family impact were: Economic Development and Tourism; Environmental Protection; Public Works, Supply and Services; the Premier's Office; and Transportation and Utilities. Four participants were interviewed in the low category.

The departments categorized as medium in family impact were: Advanced Education and Career Development; Agriculture, Food and Rural

Development; Labor; Municipal Affairs; and Treasury. Four participants were also interviewed in the medium category.

The remaining departments, categorized as high in family impact were: Community Development; Education; Family and Social Services; Health; and Justice. Thirteen participants were interviewed in the high category. The final category was labeled “other”. Four participants were interviewed in the other category. The participants coded as “other” represented participants not associated with any particular government department, such as MLA’s (Member of the Legislative Assembly) and people who were involved, formally and informally, with the Council. All face-to-face interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed according to this scheme. In addition, fourteen front-line workers were interviewed from low, medium and high categories. Figure 3.2. summarizes the interview schedule. It represents the departments, the number of participants from each of the departments that were interviewed, as well as the positions they held.

Figure 3.2: Interview Schedule

Positions	Middle	Senior	Other	Front-line
	(Face-to-Face)		(Face-to-Face)	(Telephone)
Departments				
Low	3	1		1
Medium	4			6
High	11	2		7
TOTAL	**18**	**3**	**4**	**14**
TOTAL			(Face-to-Face) **25**	(Telephone) **14**

Field notes were written immediately after each interview. Field notes included my perceptions of the interview setting. For example, the interview setting was documented according to the amount of privacy and where the interview was conducted. For instance, one interview was held in a coffee shop, one on the balcony of an office building, and a few in very large, formal board rooms. Field notes also included my mood, for example, whether I was tired, overwhelmed, or enthusiastic. They also included my perceptions of participants' moods for instance, whether participants were willing to participate, were uncertain of me, or were excited about sharing their experiences. In addition, any non-verbal behavior that was significant was recorded. For example, it was noted if a participant kept flipping through the Grid, kept going through files or, as one did, kept calling a co-worker to ask for assistance when responding to a question. If participants consistently used the same phrase or emphasized certain events, these were also noted in the field notes.

Altogether interviewing a number of participants with various positions both within and outside of government offered the opportunity of exploring and detailing a variety of experiences regarding the Grid. This research plan was intended to provide a comprehensive approach to data collection.

Documents.

Documents come in many forms such as letters, reports, memoranda, agendas, announcements, minutes of meetings, internal administrative documents and news paper articles (Yin, 1989). The documents analyzed for this research were a selection of both public and confidential written materials, from the Premier's Council, dated from 1990 - 1995. These aided in understanding the implementation of the grid as well as the family policy-making context of government at the time of this planned change.

Participant-Observations.

According to Spradey's (1980) five types of participation-observation, I was involved in “moderate participation” with the Premier's Council. In this type of participation, the researcher "maintains a balance between being an insider and an outsider, between participation and observation" (Spradey, 1980, p. 60). I attended meetings with the Premier's Council, gave input, and accepted invitations to informal gatherings sponsored by the Council. I also attended the Deputy Ministers' orientation to the Grid, four meetings with the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy and two meetings with the Interdepartmental Subcommittee on Family Policy. Although I attended these meetings and sometimes gave input, I was primarily an observer and remained an outsider. I was never considered an assistant to the Council, nor an employee of government.

I did not participate in nor observe Council activities while conducting interviews in departments, but returned to conclude data collection when interviews were complete. After each meeting or event, I wrote detailed field notes of my observations and feelings (Spradey, 1980). All notes were added to the database considered in the analysis. By becoming involved, I gained a better understanding of the issues, heard how certain decisions were made, spoke informally with those closely connected with the Grid and was given suggestions of other avenues to explore (Vanderpost, 1992).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the actual process of determining patterns of thought and behaviour and is one of the most consuming features of ethnography (Fetterman, 1989). It begins when the research problem is identified and ends with the last word of the ethnographic account (Fetterman, 1989). The data in this study came from interview transcripts, documents, and field notes.

I first scanned, read, and re-read all of the interview transcripts and other data to organize the complete set of raw data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). This initial stage consisted of "abstracting, integrating and synthesizing" the raw data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 236). From here, the search for patterns and regularities were identified and then transformed into factors and categories (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). I followed this approach to analysis in combination with my conceptual framework, which provided a strategic guide for organizing, abstracting and theorizing.

The next step was to constantly re-think and re-assemble the factors and categories by pulling apart the data, “matching, comparing, and contrasting" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 237). Factors and categories were developed, broken down, re-developed, sometimes deleted and sometimes regenerated. In this process, I asked the questions: "Which things are similar"? Which things go together and which do not"? Questions were asked until links between the data were made and a coherent picture of the process of implementation was developed.

I took one more step and moved from the description of implementation to placing the data in the etic or external perspective by analyzing or make sense of the context and identifying the factors that were involved in the implementation of the Grid. Thus, this ethnography went beyond being a description of interest to providing an analysis of the factors influencing the implementation of the Grid (Fetterman, 1989).

Trustworthiness and Credibility of the Data

Many researchers have described the scientific nature of qualitative research (Erickson, 1986; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Owens, 1982; Skrtic, 1985). In this literature, the appropriateness of the terms reliability and validity to describe the rigor of qualitative research have been questioned. The terms are deemed inappropriate by some researchers as they imply method and measurement (Patton, 1990), characteristics not strongly associated with rigor in qualitative research.

As a result, new terms have been chosen that more effectively describe the rigor of qualitative research. Although not all authors are in agreement of the most appropriate terms to use, the ones chosen for this study are trustworthiness and credibility as cited in Lather (1992).

These terms were chosen because they best describe how the quality of a qualitative study depends on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher to avoid as much error as possible throughout the research process (Patton, 1990). Trustworthiness and credibility focus on the accuracy between the raw data and the researcher's interpretations, determining "that the constructs are actually occurring rather than mere inventions of the researcher's perspective" (Lather, 1992, p. 67). They focus on the extent to which the ethnographic account recaptures the participants' experiences of implementing the Grid.

Several strategies were purposely and thoughtfully incorporated into this study to make the data trustworthy and credible. These strategies included: triangulation, participant checks, an audit trail, journal writing, and peer review.

Triangulation.

Trustworthy and credible data came about, in part, by triangulation. Both methodological triangulation and data triangulation were employed (Patton, 1990). Methodological triangulation is the use of at least two methods to study a single research problem (Morse, 1991). The rationale for employing methodological triangulation is that different methods reveal different aspects of reality therefore, multiple methods can be employed to obtain a complete picture of the phenomenon (Denzin, 1978). Interviews, document analyses and participant-observations ensured methodological triangulation.

Data triangulation is obtaining information from a variety of different data sources (Patton, 1990). The cross-section of participants within the hierarchy of government (Senior officials and middle and front line managers), in addition to members of the Premier's Council, and other key informants, along with numerous documents, provided data triangulation.

By employing methodological and data triangulation, the information given by one source and/or through one method was compared against the information given through other sources and methods. This was done to discard alternative explanations and confirm categories which resulted in an extremely comprehensive and credible view of the Grid's implementation (Fetterman, 1989).

Participant checks.

At appropriate times during and immediately after each interview, I reiterated what I understood the perspective of the participant to be and asked some clarifying questions. Furthermore, I telephoned a six participants after their interviews for further clarification of their responses. This allowed participants to make clear any unwarranted or misunderstood interpretations and/or conclusions. This strategy added to the trustworthiness and credibility of the study by ensuring that the understandings I formed were those of the participants.

An audit trail.

An audit trail tracing data collection and analysis was kept. In my audit trial file, I would document decisions that I made and why I made them. For example, if I discarded a factor, I would make note of why I discarded the factor. If I made a connection between factors, I would note how I made this connection. An audit trail is similar to leaving a trail of cues. My audit trail therefore provided me with a safeguard in the event that an outsider questioned any of the decisions or connections that I made.

Journal writing.

Journal writing was a very effective strategy to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of this study. I kept a journal of my impressions and perspectives related to the study. Through my journal, I was able to see how my experiences related to my research. For example, I was able to identify how my personal opinions about the current government related to my research. I could also see how positive and negative times in my personal life were interconnected to my research. For instance, changes that accompanied the restructuring of my home department at the University even affected my relationship to my research.

By reflecting and documenting my relationship to my research, I was aware of and was able to guard against the possibility of my experiences clouding what the participants shared about their experiences implementing the Grid. If I ever felt this was happening, I asked for a peer review to "get me back on track".

Peer review.

I discussed and shared my data collection and analysis processes with my three thesis advisors, friends and students that acted as peer reviewers. Friends included four other graduate students, two within and two outside of my home department. I also shared some of my data collection and analysis with students in three undergraduate classes for their feedback. In all cases, the participants were not identified.

Peer reviews enhanced trustworthiness and credibility because peers' perspectives were brought to bear on the data, challenging some of my interpretations, and all the while maintaining confidentiality of the data. I found peer reviews one of the most helpful and thus, most used in assisting me in data analysis.

Transferability of the Study

The reliability/validity-trustworthiness/credibility debate extends to the use of the term generalizability and whether or not it is more appropriate in qualitative research to speak in terms of transferability instead of generalizability. I adhere to the term transferability since the patterns of behaviour documented in an ethnography may possibly be used and "transferred" to other settings (other departments and/or programs) and to other people (in the same and/or similar positions). These people must read and determine if the account "fits" with their experiences.

Therefore, the findings of this study which outline the factors that influenced implementation and the nature of the change process may be used as a template by other provincial governments in Canada that are grappling with change processes for families. Most significantly, it may be used as a template outlining the process of change by provinces like New Brunswick that recently released a policy guide for families and to any other province considering doing the same.

Ethics

Gaining Access

To gain access, each participant first received a letter from me, introducing myself and describing the research study. A copy of this letter is found in Appendix B. Each prospective participant was then telephoned to further discuss the study and discover if they were willing to participate in the study. More specifically, the participants were told the purpose of the study, its usefulness, the nature of the questions and that the interview would be taped and transcribed. We also discussed that participants' participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. It was very important that the participants knew that I was not doing research for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families or for any other government department. It was also extremely important that the participants understood that I was not evaluating their progress in terms of working with the Grid. Thirteen people out of the 38 people contacted for face-to-face interviews, refused the invitation to be interviewed. Refusal to participate was primarily based on a lack of time, a lack of familiarity with the Grid, and/or a lack of interest in the Grid. As well, some individuals refused because they were apprehensive about discussing the provincial government in a negative tone.

If a person agreed to the interview, they were immediately sent a written consent form to give them ample time to read over the conditions. The consent form is found in Appendix C. The participants signed the form, in my presence, before interviewing began. Interview tapes were destroyed upon completion of this paper however, transcripts will be kept for a period of five years. Names were removed from the transcripts.

The Interviewing Relationship

My relationship with the participants was based on shared power, rapport and reciprocity (Oakley, 1981). I ensured this by adopting the learner role. I demonstrated that I was the listener and learner, interested in gaining new insight and understanding through their experiences working and implementing the Grid in the government culture.

I also managed the interview, at all times, with the most respect to the participants. I was always on time, scheduled and re-scheduled interviews at the most convenient times and places for the participants, and arrived at interviews with ample background preparation, ensuring that a participant's time was well spent. I was also very respectful of participants' schedules and was conscious of completing the interviews in the time allotted to me by the participants. I sent all participants a thank you card and gave them the option of phoning me at any time to discuss the study. Upon completion of this study, I also mailed a two-page executive summary of the final results to each participant.

Although I approached the interviews in this manner, I was cognizant of the political nature of the study and therefore, was extremely sensitive to participants feeling at risk by being interviewed. I was afraid that the participants, in order to protect themselves, would choose their responses to protect their senior officials and/or the integrity of government. I was concerned that some participants would give answers that gave the impression that implementation was going better than it actually was. I managed this possibility by acknowledging their possible fears and apprehension and explained what I would do to protect their responses.

Overall, I approached each participant in a warm and gracious manner. I was truthful and always courteous. I believe I presented myself, my home department, and the University with professionalism and integrity.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

In light of the political nature of this study, confidentiality and anonymity were very important to the participants. Confidentiality of participants was guaranteed because I was the only person having access to the raw data. Anonymity was also guaranteed as no personal names or names of departments were revealed. As previously explained, the participants were given a code as low, medium, or high reflecting their departments perceived impact on families. The participants given the code of "other" held positions not associated to a particular department. Furthermore, words or phrases were omitted from the participants' comments if I thought they would identify the participant or to the participant's department. Thus, the participants were ensured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Summary

It was very important to me, as a researcher, to have conducted a study that was not only of interest to me, but also of interest to another group. Therefore, this study was developed with the interest and assistance of the Premier's Council. In return for the time and energy given to me by the Premier's Council, making the research possible, I provided a document of the Council's and the Grid's history and a comprehensive outline of the research results to the former executive director and one staff member of the Council.

Chapter Four

Planning for the Change

Introduction

Each policy has a history that begins before its implementation. This history includes information about the precipitating conditions that produce pressures for the policy change (Lundberg, 1984), as well as, the activities that were involved in planning for the policy change. These plans, however, are not separate from implementation; instead, they set the stage for and become an important and influential part of the implementation process. Therefore, the implementation of the Grid did not begin with the formal introduction of the Grid to Alberta government departments in 1992, but the implementation process began when plans for the Grid's development and implementation were being made in 1990. The activities involved in planning partially indicated how the Grid would be received by people in government, and consequently, how the implementation process would unfold. This chapter provides a historical review of the preliminary steps that were involved in planning for the implementation of the Grid. This history therefore elucidates and illustrates, in part, the element of Planning the Change, which is one of the seven essential elements for facilitating a planned change.

The Grid's history begins when the Alberta government began to focus on the needs of families. It contains the activities and milestones that led up to the introduction of the Grid to departments in 1992. The history includes information about departments' submissions of initial implementation reports in 1993 and concludes with the disbanding of the Council in 1995. The history is a presentation of data that were gathered through face-to-face interviews and participant observations with members of the Premier's Council and a review of selected documents, located in Appendix D. An analysis of the history is provided in the summary of this chapter. This history is presented as a series of significant events surrounding the implementation of the Grid, and is depicted in Figure 4.1.

The Alberta Government's Focus on Families

Since the 1950's, dramatic economic and social changes have affected families and brought about new ways of living in families (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a). During the 1980's, these changes resulted in a growing concern for the well-being of families in many countries throughout the world, including Canada and the province of Alberta. Pressure was placed on politicians to focus on families, and over time, family well-being became a political issue.

The growing pressure in Alberta to focus on families was influenced by specific events and activities. For example, the Quebec government began to formally act on behalf of families using numerous initiatives as well as designing a policy document entitled "Think and Act Family". In the United States, a policy document called "A Strategy for Strengthening Families: Using Family Criteria in Policy-making and Program Evaluation" was also developed in 1988 to provide support to families. The Alberta Family Policy Grid resembles some parts of Quebec's document, "Think and Act Family" as well as the United States' "A Strategy for Strengthening Families."

On March 28, 1988, the Alberta government released a document entitled "Caring and Responsibility: A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta." This document proposed 11 principles to serve as the framework for social policy in Alberta. It was to be used to review and refine existing programs and to develop new programs and services for the well-being of individuals. The Alberta Family Policy Grid was developed within the context of the "Caring and Responsibility" document (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a). Specifically, the Grid addresses the following principles:
"Government policies and programs must recognize the basic unit of our society and the diversity of family structures and must support and strengthen the role of the family in Alberta society," and "Government policies and programs should involve, to the extent possible, communities and community agencies in the development, delivery and evaluation of services to families" (Alberta Government, 1988, p. 12; Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a, p. 14).

In addition, the growing concern for families became a topic of interest to politicians. Politicians became personally connected to family issues and were looking for ways to address support for families. As a result, the

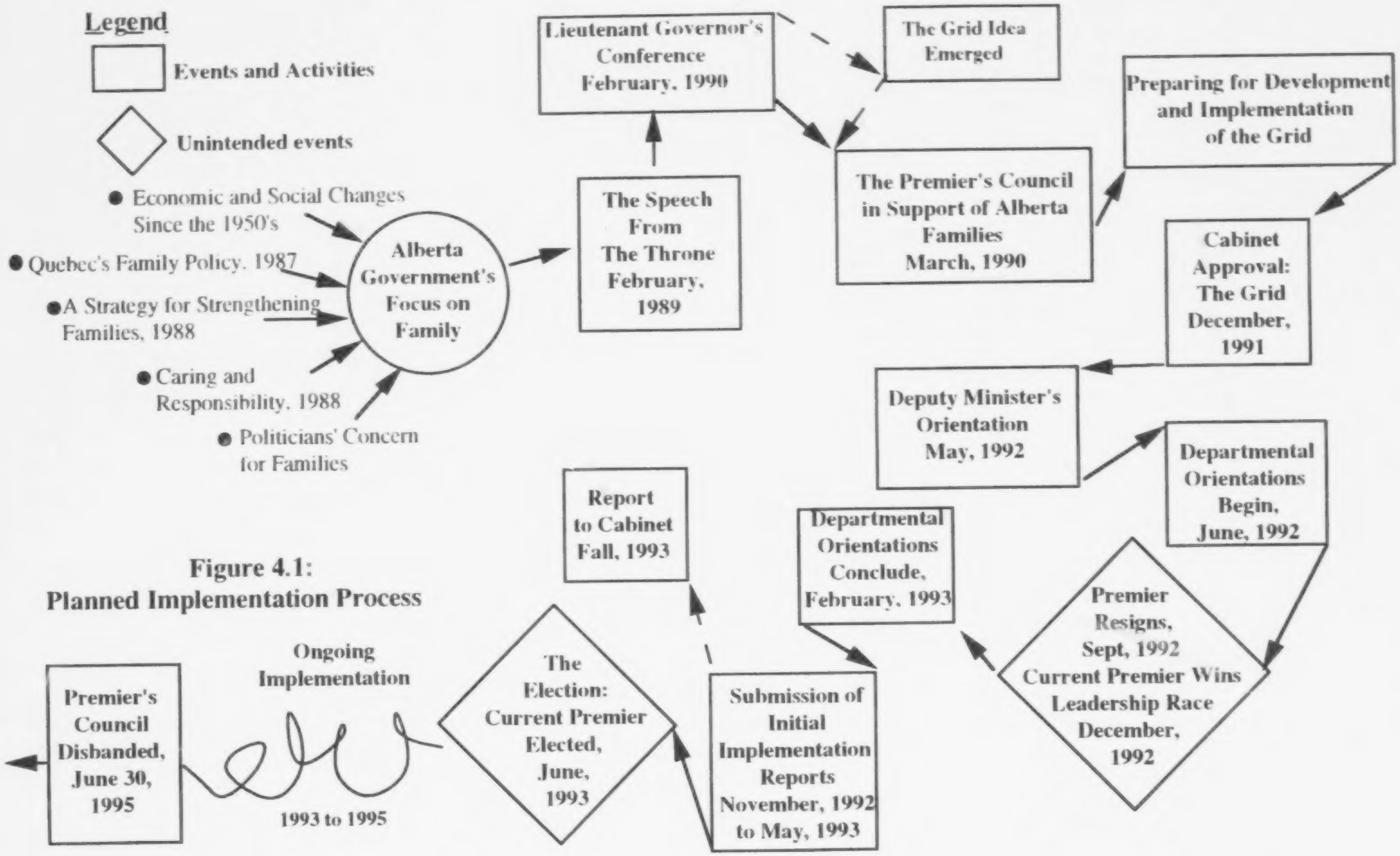

Legend
Events and Activities
Unintended events
● Economic and Social Changes Since the 1950's
● Quebec's Family Policy, 1987
● A Strategy for Strengthening Families, 1988
● Caring and Responsibility, 1988
● Politicians' Concern for Families
Alberta Government's Focus on Family
The Speech From The Throne February, 1989
Lieutenant Governor's Conference February, 1990
The Grid Idea Emerged
The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families March, 1990
Preparing for Development and Implementation of the Grid
Cabinet Approval: The Grid December, 1991
Deputy Minister's Orientation May, 1992
Departmental Orientations Begin, June, 1992
Premier Resigns, Sept, 1992 Current Premier Wins Leadership Race December, 1992
Departmental Orientations Conclude, February, 1993
Submission of Initial Implementation Reports November, 1992 to May, 1993
Report to Cabinet Fall, 1993
The Election: Current Premier Elected, June, 1993
Ongoing Implementation
1993 to 1995
Premier's Council Disbanded, June 30, 1995

Figure 4.1:
Planned Implementation Process

personal became political, and in 1989, the Premier of Alberta deliberately put families on the political agenda. Thus, the interest in families external to Alberta eventually led the Alberta government to take an interest in families.

The Speech From the Throne

The Speech from the Throne in February, 1989, formally introduced to Alberta the government's focus on families. The Throne Speech outlined five family initiatives: The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference—Celebrating Alberta's Families; The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families; Family Day Act; The Alberta Family Life and Drug Abuse Foundation; and The Community Facility Enhancement Program. The initiatives relevant to the Grid included: The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference—Celebrating Alberta's Families, held in February, 1990, and the establishment of The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families in March, 1990.

The Lieutenant Governor's Conference

The Lieutenant Governor's Conference—Celebrating Alberta's Families

was held in Edmonton from February 19-21, 1990. The purpose of the conference was to:

- build awareness and understanding of the family and its functions in the 1990's;
- identify significant challenges that face families within the context of a changing Alberta society;

- provide an opportunity for debate and dialogue on family matters;
- provide an opportunity to celebrate, enhance, and support the family;
- and develop an Agenda for Action, through identification of a series of key issues needing further dialogue and exploration, for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families to discuss more broadly with Albertans (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a, p. 7).

The coordinator of the conference, who later was named the executive director of the Premier's Council, and six staff planned the Lieutenant Governor's Conference. Planning took approximately one year, from February, 1989 to February, 1990. The conference was planned according to three streams of activity: the development of discussion papers, public participation, and informing senior level officials, politicians, and experts.

First, conference planners identified topic areas that they felt would stimulate conference participants to discuss the needs of families and to investigate ways to meet these needs for families (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a). These topic areas included: balancing work and family life, families and the community, supporting and strengthening families, learning for living - strategies for promoting family development, financial health and families, health and families, families and the education system, families and leisure, and families and the law.

Subsequently, nine study papers were prepared on these issues and sent to participants prior to the conference. The list of the study papers is found in Appendix E.

Second, conference planners identified that public participation was crucial to the success of a change concerning the government's interest in families. Without public input, the planners stated that a vision for families could not be created, and leadership by the Council could not be effectively provided. Consistent with this philosophy, planners invited over 500 individuals from across the province to participate in the conference. The individuals represented churches, schools, town/city councils, community leagues, agencies, associations, and the public at large (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a).

Third, planners invited numerous people in administrative and political roles as well as people considered highly knowledgeable in particular fields related to families to participate in the conference. Thirty government departments, both provincial and federal, sent at least one delegate. In addition, a number of Albertans from the provincial government, the city governments of Edmonton and Calgary, and Alberta universities also attended (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a).

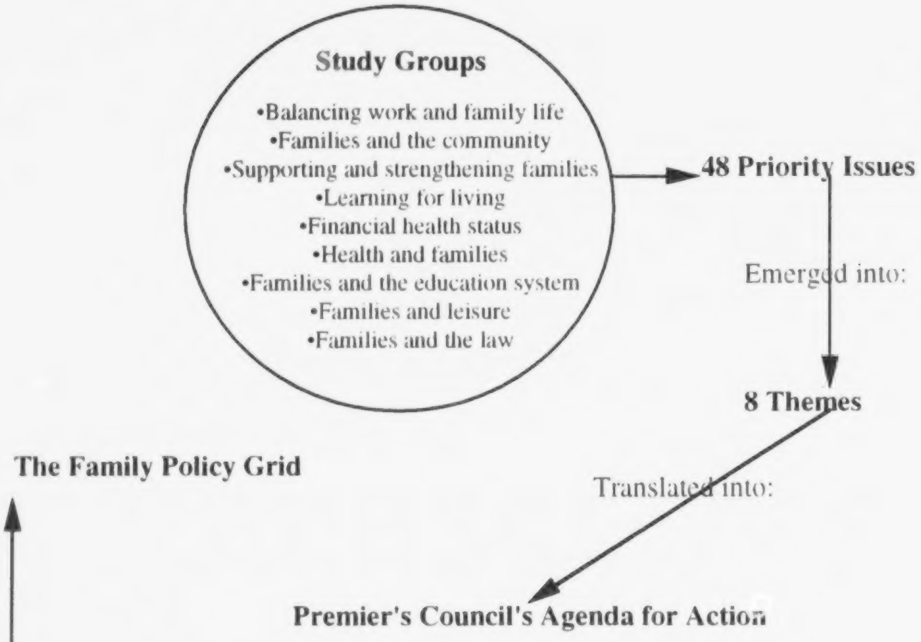
Invited participants to the conference joined one of nine groups to study one of the topics presented in the previously created background papers. The study groups identified issues related to their topic that were then consolidated into 48 priority issues, which were collapsed into eight themes, representing Albertans' concerns regarding families. The eight themes were developed into the Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council, depicted in Figure 4.2 (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a).

One theme centered on ensuring responsive systems and policies that support families. This theme was highlighted by the question "How should the systems which impact families respond to changing realities and ensure that policies support and strengthen families?" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a, p. 34). This theme was the result of the discussion by individuals in one study group who identified that the government needs some kind of system or Grid through which all government policies can be screened to determine if these policies are family-friendly. They stated that "a Family Policy Grid must be established against which public policy would be evaluated and refined to support the family" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990a, p. 20). Through this discussion, the idea for the Grid emerged.

The Premier's Council In Support of Alberta Families

In March 1990, immediately following the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference—Celebrating Alberta's Families, the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families was established. The Council reported to the Minister of Social Services. Its mandate was to act in an advisory capacity with respect to government policies, programs, and services that might

Figure 4.2:
The Lieutenant Governor's Conference - Celebrating Alberta Families
February 19 - 21, 1990


Study Groups
•Balancing work and family life
•Families and the community
•Supporting and strengthening families
•Learning for living
•Financial health status
•Health and families
•Families and the education system
•Families and leisure
•Families and the law
48 Priority Issues
Emerged into:
8 Themes
Translated into:
Premier's Council's Agenda for Action
The Family Policy Grid

1. How can we best foster cultural values that match the current and future social environment so that families can thrive?

2. How best do we address the desire to give attention to more preventive services for families without jeopardizingthe necessary rehabilitative and treatment services?

3. What mechanisms and workplace supports must we put in place to make it easier for Albertans and Alberta families to have a balance of work, leisure and family responsibilities?

4. How best can we create a social consensus which will assist communities, service agencies, and all levels of government to work cooperatively towards a common goal of supporting families?

5. How should the systems which impact families respond to address changing realities and ensure that policies support and strengthen families?

6. How can we invest energy and resources in the empowerment of communities in their essential role in supporting families?

7. To what extent can we create an environment where Albertans are open to change and growth, and seek out oppotunities for lifelong learning so that they can function effectively in a changing environment?

8. How best can we ensure that families have the skills and financial health they need in order to be strong and successful?

impact on family life in Alberta (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a). The premise from which the Council operated was that policies must be assessed to ensure that they encourage healthy family functioning and strengthen the capacity of families to meet the needs of their members (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a). The role of the Council was to advise the government on how its policies, programs, and services might affect families in Alberta and to ensure that attention was given to the needs of families in all public policies (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a).

Throughout its term, the Council had three chairpersons. Each chairperson was an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly). The chairperson was responsible for representing and speaking for the Council and its initiatives. The Council also had a 12-member advisory board, consisting of individuals from across the province. In September, 1990, the Council, guided by its chairperson and board, began preparing for the development and implementation of the Grid.

Preparing for Development and Implementation of the Grid

The Council prepared for the development and implementation of the Grid through five main areas of activity. First, the Council organized the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy, which played the main role in preparing for the development and implementation of the Grid. The Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy was established by the Council in the fall of 1990 to "assist with planning and coordinating family policy issues across government" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a). Specifically, the committee was to: "provide an interdepartmental focus on families in order to facilitate effective planning and program design and delivery across government; and provide input to the process and outputs for the development and implementation of the Family Policy Grid and to coordinate intra-departmental input to the development and implementation of the Family Policy Grid" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a, p. 33).

The Deputy Minister of each department designated an individual to serve on this Committee. Therefore, the Committee had representatives from each department who fulfilled the liaison role between departments and the Council. In turn, these individuals became responsible for the implementation of the Grid in their departments.

The Committee was headed by the executive director of the Premier's Council. Initially, Committee meetings were held every 2-3 months or when issues needed to be discussed, meeting a minimum of four times a year. The number of meetings per year decreased drastically from 1993 to 1995. The Committee had constant, but not consistent representation from each department. A person would attend from each department, but many times this person would be a stand-in for the designated interdepartmental representative.

Another committee, the Subcommittee of the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy, was created out of the Interdepartmental

Committee on Family Policy to specifically assist with the detailed development of the Family Policy Grid. It was a six-member committee that was dissolved in September, 1991, when the development of the Grid was complete.

The second area of activity was an inventory of family programs. The Premier's Council sent a letter to all Deputy Ministers requesting them to assess all of their programs, according to specified criteria, to determine these programs relative impact on families. The Council reviewed the Deputy Ministers' responses and consulted with individuals in their departments to develop a list outlining the programs in the provincial government that affected families. The list is included in the document entitled "Inventory of Provincial Government Programs Affecting Alberta Families, 1991." This document was significant to the implementation of the Grid. The Council suggested that departments use the Grid to assess the programs listed in the inventory to determine whether they encouraged healthy family functioning. The inventory was updated in 1993.

The third main area of activity initiated by the Premier's Council was community consultations. Community consultations were conducted so that the public could respond to the eight themes identified at the Lieutenant Governor's Conference. They were conducted because the Council believed that "people will commit themselves to a vision they build together through dialogue and communication" and that "change depends on investment in a new vision" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990b, p. 1).

Community consultations began on April 27, 1991 and concluded on February 1, 1992 (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992b). Twenty-four forums were held throughout the province (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992b). People unable to attend community forums were invited to organize their own informal discussion groups using a discussion guide developed by the Premier's Council. The Council received 204 discussion guide responses (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992b). In addition, people were invited to submit individual letters or briefs. The Council received 75 written submissions (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992b). Two additional forums were conducted by the Council with input from Nongovernment organizations and from Indian and Metis communities. In total, the consultation process involved approximately 3000 Albertans (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992b).

The Premier's Council compiled the comments from the various sources into a document entitled "Albertans Speak Out About Families" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992b). This document summarized the issues and problems Albertans wanted addressed and/or solved in order to improve family well-being. Individuals responsible for implementing the Grid were expected to use this document as a base from which to make their policy decisions concerning families.

The fourth area of activity initiated by the Premier's Council was general research activities. The research was coordinated by a member of the Council who was hired, throughout the term of the Council, 1990-1995, to fill a contract research position. One research study was specifically to be used by individuals responsible for implementing the Grid. This study focused on the structural, economic, and social conditions of Alberta families, and the results were compiled into a document entitled "Alberta Families Today" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992c). This document summarized the conditions of families served by government departments. It was intended to help individuals implementing the Grid to make informed policy decisions based on the different structural, economic, and social conditions of Alberta families.

The Council also set up an academic advisory committee as the fifth area of activity. It sent letters to the presidents of Alberta universities, inviting them to nominate a person(s) from their institution to form a group that could provide input into the development of the Grid and that could interact with the Council on issues of mutual interest. This academic advisory committee included people from the universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge and one person from the Canadian Institute for Law and the Family. This academic advisory committee met once, but when required, members of this committee offered their assistance to the Council, on an individual basis.

Cabinet Approval: The Family Policy Grid

After the Grid was developed and preparations were made for its implementation, the Grid was submitted for Cabinet approval in October, 1991. It was approved by Cabinet on December 4, 1991.

The Deputy Ministers' Orientation

The Grid was introduced to the province's Deputy Ministers at the Deputy Ministers' orientation on May 4, 1992. The objectives of the orientation were to introduce the Grid, outline its purpose, encourage commitment, introduce the pilot projects, and outline the expectations of the Council regarding the implementation of the Grid. Very few Deputy Ministers attended; instead, they sent alternates in their place.

One strategy for specifically introducing the Grid to departments was through pilot projects. The Council tabled the idea of pilot testing the Grid to all Ministers prior to the orientation and asked which of their Deputy Ministers might be interested in participating. The departments that participated were Alberta Health, Career Development and Employment, and Culture and Multiculturalism. These departments piloted the Grid from February, 1992 to March, 1992 and a member from each department reported the results at the Deputy Ministers' orientation. The reports included a verbal synopsis of the process used, challenges encountered, advice for other Grid users and for the Premier's Council, and opinions about the Grid's usefulness. The reports on the pilot tests were, overall, very positive.

At the orientation, attendees were made aware of a document that would help with the task of reviewing policies and writing initial implementation reports that were due on November 15, 1992. Specifically, the document outlined: the basic steps for applying the Grid, information requirements, assessment procedures, and a suggested format for implementation reports. Departments were to include in their initial implementation reports: a general assessment of the review, identification of the process used, description of the results, and the delineation of the department's future plans for the use of the Grid (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1991).

Departmental Orientations

Also at the Deputy Ministers' orientation in May, 1992, the Council offered to conduct departmental orientations to familiarize the members of each department with the implementation process. Thirty-four departmental orientations were conducted from June, 1992 to February, 1993. The orientations covered an introduction to the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, its activities, a description of the documents that were considered useful for implementing the Grid, and what was to be included in the departmental report to the Council.

The Premier Resigned

On September 9, 1992, during departmental orientations, the Premier resigned, and a leadership race began. On December 5, 1992, a Minister in the former Premier's Cabinet was elected as Progressive Conservative leader.

Submission of Initial Implementation Reports

On November 15, 1992, during this shift in leadership, initial implementation reports from departments were expected to be submitted to the Council. After this date passed, the Council made reminder telephone calls to those departments that had not submitted their reports. At this time, four departments reported that the Grid would not be implemented because they did not provide a service to families. The Council had received most reports by February, 1993, but it accepted reports until May, 1993, when all departments, even those who stated that the Grid was inappropriate for their use, had submitted a report. The content of these reports is confidential.

The Election

In June, 1993, a provincial election was held. The individual who won the leadership race six months prior to the election was elected Premier and a provincial Progressive Conservative government was maintained.

Report to Cabinet

The Council summarized the initial implementation reports and submitted a report to Cabinet in the fall of 1993. However, with the change in leadership of the government, Cabinet had also changed. Therefore, the Premier and Cabinet who received the implementation report were different from the Premier and Cabinet who approved the Grid in December, 1991. The Council managed this change in leadership and Cabinet by introducing the Grid to the new Premier and his Cabinet through a written brief. The current Premier then signed the Grid principles, demonstrating the continuation of the Grid as part of government policy-making under his leadership.

Ongoing Implementation, 1993 to 1995

From 1993 to 1995, there was a great deal of organizational change occurring within government. The Council was lead by the same executive director, but three different MLA's served as chairperson. Each chairperson's departure was due to a re-assignment to a different area of government. The reporting relationship of the Council was also moved from the Department of Family and Social Services to the Department of Community Development for a short time, but it was later returned to the Department of Family and Social Services. Restructuring in government resulted in changes in staff. Some individuals who were directly involved with the Grid were laid off or were re-assigned to different areas in their departments and were given new responsibilities. In addition, with the shift in Premier, some of the Members of the Legislative Assembly changed, some of the Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Assistant Deputy Ministers changed, the number of departments changed, some of the members of the Interdepartmental Committee changed, and the focus of the government changed. Change was, undoubtedly, the common theme.

Throughout 1993 to 1995, the Interdepartmental Committee met only a few times. A year transpired before the March 10, 1994 meeting where members discussed the status of the Grid's implementation and the next steps to be taken in monitoring implementation. It was decided that the Council would examine each department's three-year business plan against the Grid to ensure that each department was keeping families in mind. This analysis occurred during the summer of 1994.

In January, 1995, the Premier's Council concluded that families were not central in most departments' three-year business plans. In response, the Council sent letters to all Cabinet Ministers to remind them of the Grid. Although the priorities in the business plans were not family related, in an interview with the Council, a member reported that subtle changes were occurring as a result of the Grid. Furthermore, this member stated that because the Council acted quickly and got the new Premier "on board" with the Grid, the shift in leadership did not have any deleterious effects on the implementation of the Grid. In this interview, the members of the Council who were most involved with the Grid reported that, overall, things were going well with its implementation.

The Premier's Council was Disbanded

In March, 1995, the Council was told by its current Chairperson that it would be disbanded as of June 30, 1995 because it had fulfilled its mandate. As a result, the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy met for the last time on May 3, 1995. A representative from each department was present.

At this meeting, Committee members shared information on the changes that had occurred in their departments since the Grid was introduced, but the primary focus of their reports covered the time period since the last meeting in 1994. They did not report on changes that were a direct result of the Grid, but they described changes that occurred as a result of down-sizing in their departments. For example, they described programs that had been dissolved, positions that had been terminated, and mergers that had taken place. Members discussed their concerns about these changes and how these changes affected families. They identified the areas where government should proceed with caution. The results of the meeting were compiled into the Premier's Council's final report. The contents of this report are confidential.

A member of the Council explained that there was a possibility that a Caucus committee for families, made up of Members of the Legislative Assembly, would be created to monitor the impact government has on families, and thus, keep the Grid active. As of September, 1995, this committee had not been created.

Summary

Documents, interviews, and participant observations were employed to piece together this historical account of planning for the implementation of the Grid. In addition to this description, the data were reviewed to draw out salient aspects of the historical account.

The Premier's Council, named by the Premier as the change agent, planned the implementation of the Grid in a very well-organized and systematic manner. They employed many strategies, some of which were mirrored in the conceptual framework, that set the stage for implementing the Grid and eventually changing the family policy-making system of government.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference was the first significant event that tested the interest in a planned change for families. It was held to draw attention to the Premier's Council, which was to be formally established in a few days, as representative of the people of Alberta. Requesting experts to develop discussion papers and requesting high profile community members and politicians to attend the conference, was done to stimulate interest in and legitimize the conference and thus, legitimize the outcomes of the conference. The emergence of the idea for the Grid from a study group validated the Grid since it came from the people of Alberta and not from within government.

The process of community consultation, which occurred during 1991, was planned and conducted to involve people in the family vision being developed by the Council and build their commitment to the Grid. Thus, the activities of the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference and community consultation were important to establishing support to the Council and its work on behalf of families by members of the community.

The Council also put together a group of academic advisors and printed the membership of this advisory group in an appendix in the Grid. This group was available to assist the Council only if required. This did not mean that the advisory group was active in providing input, but having these individuals available added credibility to the Grid and to the work of the Premier's Council from both within and outside of government. As well, planning for the implementation of the Grid also included the preparation of numerous research documents that were to be used as a base for making decisions when implementing the Grid. By conducting research, the Premier's Council became informed and thus, was able to present itself as a credible initiator of the change to members of the community and individuals in government.

The remaining activities instigated by the Premier's Council as the change agent directly reflect the elements in the conceptual framework because they focus on the activities planned, within government, to facilitate the implementation of the Grid. The Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy played a very important role in the implementation of the Grid. By requesting the Deputy Ministers of each department to designate an individual to be responsible for implementing the Grid in departments, the Council attempted to develop feelings of responsibility and ownership and, thus, commitment to the Grid from middle managers within government.

Another extremely important milestone in the implementation plan occurred when Cabinet approved the Grid. This approval by the senior officials in government bestowed an official acknowledgment that the Grid was part of the policy-making process in the Alberta government. Furthermore, the approval by Cabinet, headed by the Premier, signified leadership of the implementation of the Grid, which was important to facilitating a planned change.

The Deputy Ministers' orientation marked the formal introduction of the Grid to the Deputy Ministers' and their departments. It was held to secure senior level commitment to the Grid, yet few Deputy Ministers attended. They sent "stand-ins" to represent their departments at this orientation, signaling a warning from very early in the process of implementation that senior officials were neither convinced of the need for, nor were committed to the implementation of the Grid.

Pilot projects played a significant role at the Deputy Ministers' orientation. Pilot projects were referred to as "peer modeling" by the Council. Pilot projects were important because individuals shared their experiences of implementing the Grid with individuals from departments that would soon have the same task of implementing the Grid. Pilot projects demonstrated that implementation had begun and that implementation was expected from remaining departments. In addition, departmental orientation seminars were conducted to assist individuals in writing initial implementation reports. Therefore, the Premier's Council planned the change by incorporating activities such as the Deputy Ministers' orientation, pilot projects, departmental orientation seminars, and so forth, that would build commitment to the Grid and would enhance the Grid's implementation in the future. As well, through these activities, the Council was in constant communication with departments regarding the implementation of the Grid, which was also important to facilitating a planned change.

Furthermore, the Council ensured that all departments would complete the initial implementation report by, again, drawing on the leadership of the implementation of the Grid. Each department was informed that a summary of reports would be submitted to Cabinet. Thus, regardless if a department intended to implement the Grid or not, the Council received all department implementation reports by May, 1993.

The change was planned and unfolded from 1990 - 1993 in an incremental manner. However, after the submission of the initial implementation reports, the Council was responsible for monitoring implementation, simultaneously, in all departments throughout government. This was a tremendous task. In addition, the period between 1993 and 1995 was chaotic in the provincial government; organizational change was rapidly occurring. This made monitoring implementation very difficult. Individuals who participated in interviews for the research shared how implementation of the Grid occurred during this time. A presentation of their comments are included in the findings of this research in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Findings

Introduction to the Findings

In this chapter, participants' responses to the research question, "What is the nature of the implementation of the Family Policy Grid"? explained what, in reality, happened in the process of implementing the Grid. The process is explained through several factors, identified by the participants, which hindered or interrupted the implementation process. Understanding all of these factors is important to appreciate how a planned change unfolded in a government context.

Each factor in this chapter is represented by two or three participants' comments that best describe the factor. Factors have been encompassed into broader categories and put into sections that move from a macro perspective to a micro perspective. For example, the first section captures the participants' comments about the contextual factors specific to the provincial government that affected the implementation of the Grid. The second section was guided by the conceptual framework as outlined in Chapter Two and includes the participants' responses about the elements of planned change that they perceived affected the implementation of the Grid. The third section includes the participants' comments about the Grid as an instrument of change.

The participants were identified as members of departments considered to be low, medium or high in family impact. These designations were developed by members of the Premier's Council according to their perceptions of how departments' work impacted upon families. The comments labeled as 'other' identified key participants who were involved with the Grid, but were not from any specific government department. The reason for categorizing comments into these groups was to determine whether the participants' experiences with implementation would differ according to their association or lack of association with particular departments. For example, it was expected that the participants from the Department of Family and Social Services would experience implementing the Grid differently than the participants from the department of Energy or the participants not associated with a particular department.

Surprisingly, there was little differentiation in the participants' views based upon the groups of low, medium, high and other. In other words, the participants from, for example, the Departments of Family and Social Services, Energy, and those not associated with a particular department, made comments very similar regarding the Grid. This was very unexpected. These similar comments provide evidence of a common view of the Grid and its implementation.

The participants' recurring comments about implementation intersected to create factors. Related factors were clustered together to create categories and likewise, related categories came together to form sections. Each section concludes with a reflection on the categories and factors within the section. Together, the information summarized in the factors, categories and sections formed a detailed picture of the nature of the implementation process at the middle management level. The presentation of the findings begins with the first section, the Provincial Government.

The Provincial Government

In this section, the participants shared their opinions about particular aspects of the Alberta government at the time implementation of the Grid was unfolding. Their opinions became factors within the policy-making context of government that influenced the Grid's implementation.

This section includes four categories: The Alberta Government Culture, The Organization and Operation of Government, The Current Government's Priorities, and The Current Government's Values Concerning Families. The categories move from participants' general understanding of the current government to more specific ideas about the current government and then to the current government's values concerning families.

The Alberta Government Culture

A profile of the specific Alberta government culture at the time of the planned change is created from the participants' discussion of experiences working within government. A culture consists of the rules created and used by a group to organize its behaviour. Culture is meaningful because it determines what is and is not considered appropriate behaviour. The culture of the Alberta government is described by the following factors:

Senior officials' power determines priorities; Bureaucrats follow senior officials' priorities; and *Toe the line.*

Senior officials' power determines priorities.

The participants perceived that the Premier of the province dictated the priorities of government. In addition, they perceived that other senior officials in government, through their relationship with the Premier, could influence the overall priorities of government. For example, one participant explained that if the head of the Premier's Council for Families was powerful or has "his" work connected with the Progressive Conservative party, then "the Grid can happen".

> **High**
> In government the more powerful you are as a Cabinet Minister, the more you'll have things done. People talk about how powerful the Deputy Premier is in terms of getting what he wants, compared to others. So a powerful Minister who has the ear of the Premier says, I'm sure I can get this from him. So that's how it works.
>
> **High**
> In politics, various groups have to fight and that's the nature of politics, you have to fight...to get the Premier's ear. So given this time of scarce resources, the Grid depends on how the head of this Council fights for the Grid...Even when this three year business plan was being written, all governments had to go in front of Treasury to make their case, you know. You want to preserve your department, and that's the nature of politics. So that's how I think the Grid will work. If the guy who is head of the Premier's Council for Families is very powerful in terms of, let's say his work is connected in the PC party, then the Grid can happen.
>
> **Other**
> There is a lot of stuff that goes on...and you just see, it's still so much who you know...If you are a good buddy with another Minister, that's how you get stuff put through. And it's not representing what the people want.

Bureaucrats follow senior officials' priorities.

It is evident by these examples that the priorities of government are viewed as being decided across the senior official level of government, mainly by the Premier and influential Cabinet Ministers. Following, the participants further explained that these priorities are adhered to by bureaucrats in their daily work.

The participants described senior officials as their "task masters". Senior officials directed their work and participants acted accordingly. Most interesting is the participant's comment referring to the power of senior officials over bureaucrats. This participant stated that "we are not all free and equal in a hierarchy" and that "it is not just the power of our personalities that persuades the others around us, there is another system operating", which is the system of senior officials' power.

> **High**
> The civil servants have to do what the politicians desire. If there is a strong political will to do something, then the bureaucrats are directed to do it. If it is not a political imperative at the time, then we have to focus on other areas where there is a political imperative.

> **Other**
> Its so important that this *(the Grid)* be maintained at the senior level of government. Because if I'm in middle management and I get this family Grid...and I know that my task master's are saying this is important, we want this assessment for real and in depth, then I'm going to work hard at making it. I'm committed to it because the senior people I report to are committed to it.

Toe the line.

Another factor, *Toe the line*, is similar to *Bureaucrats follow senior officials' priorities* however, it adds another dimension to supporting senior officials' priorities. The participants described that they must support what senior officials' support and do so even if this means disregarding or ignoring their own values and beliefs. Working in government means you cannot disagree, "talk negatively", nor make trouble. You must *Toe the line* or you "don't have a job".

> **Low**
> The thing about government is, it's very political. And you pretty much have to toe the party line, like it or not, or you don't have a job. And that's really the bottom line...You have to espouse the values that you're told to espouse, given the hierarchy that we work with. So if your particular Minister says, I believe in traditional family values, then that executive director is going to have to toe that line. I know that, everybody knows that. Whether you would vote that way or whether you have those ideological beliefs yourself, it's a whole different story, but that's the reality. So if you're really going to try to work from the inside you somehow, without being subsumed or sucked into the vortex, have to be able to manipulate your way through that type of jungle.
>
> **High**
> Given the way government works, even if you disagree with it and you're told that it has to be done, you'll do it.
>
> **High**
> I've been told that any employee was not to talk negatively, not to reflect negatively about what is going on in government.
>
> **Other**
> I don't like to use the word top down, but that's what we're talking about. I will support and even vigorously support policy initiatives that I personally might not be committed to because I am committed to the decisions of government. If there's some policy decision I might not think is worth two bits, but if that's a decision of government, then I vigorously support it, and I make

> sure others in the department vigorously support it. So you just have to toe the line.

The Organization and Operation of Government

The participants referred to three static characteristics of government that affected the implementation of the Grid. These made up the category, The Organization and Operation of Government and were organized into the factors: *Size* of government, the *Bureaucracy* of government and the government as *Heterogeneous*.

Size.

The participants mentioned the size of government, the number of departments and the number of people within each department as an obstacle to implementing the Grid. They described that "government is big and programs are spread out all over the place", making implementation difficult.

> **Low**
> Government is a large organization and like in any organization, implementation of any kind is difficult.
>
> **High**
> One thing that is hitting home right now is how big government is and how programs are spread out all over the place and how do you do something all together...it's a tough thing to do.

Bureaucracy.

The participants also described government as a bureaucratic organization, mentioning specifically the hierarchy of government as hindering the implementation of the Grid. As described by one participant, there are "too many tiers to go up and down".

> **Low**
> I wrote the departmental report. It had to go through all the various checks and balancing throughout the organizational hierarchy. When...they were comfortable with what was written, then it went from here to there, to the Premier's Council that is.

> **Medium**
> To implement the Grid, government is perhaps still a little too structured; there's so many different levels. What has happened within our department is we've tried to flatten our structure so that you're getting more work effort through teams and coordinating those type of efforts. But I still see, within other areas of government, there are just too many tiers of people to go through, up and down, to get a policy like the Grid, identified and then to implement it, there's certainly too many steps to go through.

> **Other**
> When I think of government and I think of the bureaucracy in trying to affect change in it, it's staggering. Its like, I remember someone describing government as being this huge ocean-liner, and it has to make a turn, a real quick turn. And you don't make a quick turn when you're an ocean-liner.

Heterogeneity.

The participants described the heterogeneity in government as a further barrier when work is to be shared and implemented across government. One participant explained that "it is hard to cut anything horizontally across different activities and different functions to have it come out where it makes sense and is balanced". Heterogeneity is illustrated through comments revealing the many different departments in government having various mandates and holding various interests.

> **Low**
> It is hard to cut anything horizontally across different activities and different functions to have it come out where it makes sense and is balanced...There are different departments, different functions and different activities, and that's hard to do. And you'd run into this problem no matter whether you're doing it for family or any other group.

> **High**
> Well it's (*the Grid)* virtually impossible to implement. One of the things that we see in this government is...you attempt to coordinate within a department but there are lots of structural barriers between departments. And it takes a very great and conscious effort for related people in different places to get together and find out what's going on and to arrive at a joint direction. Now this government is attempting to deal with that, but I don't think they have been successful yet.

> **High**
> When we want to make a joint proposal, with another department, we have two standing policy committees to go and see. And then they have to talk to each other and so it's a very complicated thing even when you're sphere of interest is similar. So when you get to something like the Family Policy Grid, then you're saying, okay, everybody, get together and do this. I mean, the mechanisms simply aren't there.

The Current Government's Priorities

The category, The Current Government's Priorities, provides a basic picture of the direction and priorities of the current government. This category is significant because, through participants' comments, it describes what was and what was not the current government's priorities. The factors in this category are: *The Grid is not a priority; Eliminating the deficit is the priority;* and *Eliminating the deficit through down-sizing.*

The Grid is not a priority.

The participants described that although they knew about the Grid, it was not given attention because it was not a priority of the current Premier and thus, not the main business of departments.

> **Low**
> I knew there was something on the Grid, but it wasn't given much priority because it wasn't considered to be a top issue for us.

> **High**
> What you see with a change in government is a re-prioritizing. And so this government has established some new priorities. And when they say, well here's ten new priorities that you have to work on and they never mention this one. You say, good, I was never keen to do the Grid in the first place and now I don't have to.
>
> **High**
> All the organizations in the Alberta government have been involved in a re-conceiving of their basic business and the Grid is outside of departments' important consideration and involvement.
>
> **High**
> People felt if our Deputy or our Minister said this (*the Grid*) is important then we've got to follow through, but they didn't. So people looked at it, but did it as, let's get this exercise out of the way and get onto the stuff that is really important.
>
> **High**
> I get the sense that this particular group of Ministers will back off from putting out these overarching kinds of things, like, 'you should think of families' and all of that. It's now from a different political era. They have a different set of priorities.

Eliminating the deficit is the priority.

The former factor describes that the Grid was not a priority, whereas, this factor describes what, in fact, was the priority of the current government: It was the elimination of the provincial deficit. The participants specifically explained that the government's plan took precedence over the Family Policy Grid. Assuredly, the participants reported that the government was "balancing the budget", "saving money", and taking a "corrective stance in regards to the finances of the province", over the implementation of the Family Policy Grid.

> **Medium**
> Right now, one can say that the deficit reduction thing is the government's main priority and also...commencing the three year business plan is our priority now, so this (*the Grid)* may not be of any good.
>
> **High**
> We do what we can for families and it may not be the Grid, but it's our attempt to try to serve clients. But when choices, when nasty choices have to be made, it tends to be the imperative of the day that matters. And today's imperative is saving money.
>
> **High**
> I think there is certainly a different focus at this time because the focus of the government at the moment is on taking a corrective stance in regards to the finances of the province. So that is their primary focus, not the Grid.

Eliminating the deficit through down-sizing.

According to the participants, the Alberta government engaged in significant down-sizing strategies in order to accomplish their priority of eliminating the deficit. The actions of down-sizing in departments, as described by the participants, were conceptualized as sub-factors and included: budget cuts, reduction in staff, department mergers, and re-prioritizing. The participants perceived that these actions, in turn, affected the implementation of the Grid in departments.

The sub-factors were not easily distinguished from one another since the participants did not often isolate one particular activity of down-sizing, but referred to two or more activities in a single comment, such as budget cuts and loss of staff. Acknowledging this complexity, comments were used to support the most clearly expressed sub-factor.

First, many of the participants emphasized that budget cuts were a significant aspect of down-sizing that ultimately affected the implementation of the Grid.

> **Medium**
> Our difficulty right now is with the decrease in government budgets, a number of our programs are certainly shrinking and we just don't have the same availability of program funding to do the Grid.
>
> **High**
> Departments have been in the midst of re-organization and re-focusing and have found it difficult to look at the Grid as a document to guide policy because...the issue for us is not going to be how to develop policies and programs that support families, but how to save policies and programs that support families...so the Grid is just not do-able.
>
> **Other**
> The previous Premier was the one that was all families. And then we have the new Premier come in and it's cut backs. It's the king. And where's the Grid? Where's the wonderful Grid that was supposed to be clocking everything that's going on. And...this cannot be good for families.

Second, the participants explained that a reduction in staff and less people to do the same amount of work was a part of down-sizing. The reduction in staff meant, in many cases, that if the person responsible for the Grid left, so did the presence of the Grid in the department. The implementation of the Grid was therefore, affected by the decrease in staff.

> **Medium**
> It would take probably the Premier's Council to come back and say, this Grid is still alive and you have to assign somebody else to play a role in it...You get one person carrying it, and that persons gone, so is the Grid.
>
> **Medium**
> From 1992, when the Grid was first implemented, to probably this summer, we will have seen a sixty two percent down-size

> in staff. And it was quite fortunate I guess that I was a survivor... because if I had not been, who knows what would have happened with the Grid?
>
> **High**
> Another thing that affects (*the Grid*) and that's the turn over of staff, which gets rid of some people that perhaps were involved with the Grid. Plus those who are left don't have a lot of time. Your colleagues take a walk for one reason or another and you must pick up his job too. There has not been the equivalent reduction of function with the loss of staffing so that's going to affect the time you can devote to something that isn't your bread and butter.

Third, department mergers were another aspect of down-sizing. The participants described how merging with another department had resulted in confusion regarding who was working with and/or responsible for the implementation of the Grid.

> **Low**
> We amalgamated with...and we physically merged with them in the summer of 93. So that is important to know because that affects the way things have happened, or should I say not happened, with the Grid.
>
> **High**
> We were going to revise our...evaluation instrument so that future program evaluations would keep the Grid principles in mind. Now whether or not this has been done, I don't know, because since the departments have amalgamated we now have different evaluators...so they wouldn't necessarily be familiar with the Grid.

Fourth, during the time of down-sizing, the participants explained they were required to re-prioritize their department's priorities and re-focus to work toward these priorities. In the re-prioritizing process, the Grid was not identified as a priority.

> **Low**
> In the environment today...there is fiscal restraint and shutting down programs...So we are in a time to question what it is the department does and what our purpose is, and that has a different focus than a social portfolio.
>
> **High**
> What has happened to put a snag in anything that government was doing is really the three year business plans and the focus on the deficit. For government to take a look at everything its doing, all of its priorities and re-line those with the view of eliminating the deficit. So everything now has to be reviewed in light of the three year business plans. So where the Grid fits, I don't know.

The Current Government's Values Concerning Families

In this category, the participants' comments linked the current government specifically to families and family issues, which developed into an understanding of the current government's values concerning families. This category is critical to capturing factors that affected the implementation of the Grid. It delves deeper and moves beyond the government's association with the Grid to the government's underlying values and assumptions concerning families. This category thus, also forewarns of government's willingness and capacity to be involved with families and make improvements to its family policy-making. The factors in this category are: *Families are not a priority*; *Families must be responsible for themselves; Government should not be involved with families* and *Government takes a traditional approach to families.*

Families are not a priority.

The participants reported that the priorities of the current government did not include the Grid, nor did they include families. The Grid and families were overshadowed by the main priority of deficit elimination. The participants described that "the imperative of the day is saving money". In light of "cutting the deficit", the participants explained that "families are not necessarily a priority" and "families as a priority will not come up again".

> **High**
> People have been caught in this deficit thing of cut, cut, cut and it's really seeped into our thinking. And even though it is hurting people and people who have families, people think it's a good thing. Even though no one is sure of what's going to happen. And they think that spending money on children and families is a waste. And that's that, even though I disagree with that.
>
> **High**
> In Saskatchewan, they introduced some legislation about part-time work and having proportionate benefits for part-time workers. But that just wouldn't happen in Alberta, even though it's supporting families and supporting women, who are a big part of the part-time work force. They would see that as the business community wouldn't be attracted to this province. So they'd rather make it easier for that sector to improve the economy because that's their priority. It's not to help part-time workers and women.
>
> **Other**
> Family is not a priority with this government, it's all economics. And the people that are happy with this government are the ones that are comfortable...and they say that the current Premier is a good guy.

Families must be responsible for themselves.

A striking number of participants explained that not only was government, through its deficit elimination, disregarding families, but also stated that *Families must be responsible for themselves.* Family responsibility or self-sufficiency is one of the most expressive factors of the government's values concerning families because it provides a large part of the rationale behind the government's decisions that affect families. Some of the participants believed that the idea of family responsibility would have negative or hurtful impacts on families, while others were more uncertain about the possible impacts.

> **High**
> It's government saying they shouldn't intervene with families, that government should be at arm's length to families and it's more of a cop out on government's part. You know, they just want to foist everything onto families and say, you look after your own.

> **High**
> Certainly government is pushing towards the family to take on more responsibility for their own well-being...My guess is that one of the ripples of this will be to strengthen family relationships... Because you saw in the Edmonton Journal, there's not too much support for the welfare system here in Alberta. And what that means is there's more pressure for people to support their family members or we'll have a growing street population.

> **High**
> The focus of government has changed to saying the responsibility is with the individual and the family to become self-sufficient. Now, you could say that the old system ensured, for instance, that families with children were at least not out on the streets. Whereas this new system says, if the parent is not responsible according to government terms, then he gets thrown out...and that's the way it is, and that's their problem. And that has an affect on families.

> **Other**
> The current Premier has recognized that families not only are important but are increasingly important because, and he has said himself, as government pulls out of more areas of financial support, we are going to be relying on our families to pull together. So we're saying, now you've come for help, where's your family? What can we do to get you back together with your family? Because we can't give you the money you need. So I think the government is increasingly relying on families to be pulling together and helping its members.

Government should not be involved with families.

Adding to the comments related to the government's values on families is the factor, *Government should not be involved with families*. The participants articulated a range of opinions, from no involvement with families, to involvement only if there was a problem in families, to more analytical statements concerning if and when it was appropriate to be involved.

This factor is the first, out of only two factors, that can be slightly differentiated according to low or high departments. The participants in departments with a low impact on families clearly described that government should not be involved in family initiatives. They shared the conservative perspective of government that family is a private matter. The participants from departments with a high impact on families questioned whether it was appropriate to focus on families.

> **Low**
> Our Minister agreed to support a government corporate strategy for International Year of the Family...But it meets with a surprising amount of opposition because people feel...this isn't the role for the department and they think its a waste of government money...Also, some people who don't have families feel that...giving advantages towards a family isn't fair.
>
> **Low**
> The role the government has is basically just facilitating where it might be a family...problem.
>
> **High**
> I think government has difficulty dealing with families, because we have legislation which we have to administer and goals and objectives we have to meet. And families are not part of that.

> **High**
> I think there is a need for government policies to be sensitive to social and community issues, whether they are linked to family or whether they are linked to any other group. So I don't think we should be any more sensitive or involved with family issues than we should be to all kinds of other issues.

Government takes a traditional approach to families.

The participants specifically described the current government's values as traditional. They described that the current government had a traditional approach to families that was being translated into policies that were "putting values on families" and "going against the grain" of individuals who see family in a "broader", non-traditional perspective. This factor, along with the three previous factors, completes the participants' perspectives of the values of the current government concerning families.

> **High**
> The government is putting values on families. They are changing policies that force women to stay at home and look after their children. They think that the family and society will be better if women are home being mothers and having babies, instead of having the policies that will enable them to contribute to the economy if they choose, and then supporting them in doing that.

> **High**
> Now a conservative government has their own idea of what is family. If you want to see the ideas of the Cabinet Ministers, just look through the Alberta Report! Just go through there and these conservative ideas have the influence on government policy...which might be against the grain of other people who might want to see a much broader perspective of what a family is.

Reflections on Implementation: The Provincial Government

The concept of culture and the category The Alberta Government Culture is meaningful to this study on implementation because of the culture's profound influence on the participants' behaviour. The participants described the cultural rules that directed the behaviour of people in government. These rules established the power of senior officials to decide the direction of government. This is a top-down way of working and is typical of most bureaucratic systems because it is based on authority and relies heavily on a centralized structure for decision making (Kruschke & Jackson, 1987). A top-down approach enables senior officials to maintain control of decision-making.

The participants spoke with such clarity and certainty about the power of senior officials that this emerged as one of the first factors influencing implementation. It was explicitly understood by bureaucrats that regardless of what they felt was important, they had to comply with the priorities of senior officials, even if the values underlying these priorities conflicted with their own value systems. Therefore, senior officials' power, embedded in the culture of government, helps to explain the meaning behind bureaucrats' choices to implement or not implement the Grid.

During the early stages of data analysis, I connected a large proportion of the participants' comments to the power of senior officials. These interconnections suggested it was an all-encompassing factor. It took a few months of concentrated analysis to separate out the specific factors within this immense factor. When these factors were removed, the remaining ones came together to describe the participants' experiences of the culture of government.

The culture of government also became a reality in the interview setting. It was apparent which participants were advised, through the power of a senior official, to participate in the study and which participants chose to participate and were truly interested in participating. The participants who were advised to participate kept referring to the priorities of senior officials and the direction of government. They kept looking outside of themselves, to the external environment, for answers. For example, a comment would begin with, "According to the direction of this department...". These participants were also more likely to get side-tracked and their tone was generally more formal. Whereas, the participants who chose to participate shared more of their feelings and opinions and their mood was warmer and more informal. I found the differences in interviews frustrating at first and tried to figure out what I was doing to cause such a difference between interviews. After I became aware of these differences and how they were manifested in the interview setting, I actually found, analytically, the differences quite interesting.

Another category that appeared quite early in data analysis and also describes the provincial government is the category, The Organization and Operation of Government. The participants were very astute about organizational characteristics and their impacts on planned change. They clearly described the government's large size, bureaucracy, and heterogeneity as hindering the implementation of the Grid. Their comments furthermore, confirmed what the literature documents about these characteristics and how they impede planned change. However, these characteristics of the government of Alberta are no different than large government organizations elsewhere and thus, any kind of planned change within government is subject to them.

These characteristics of the organization and operation of government were a significant part of the discussions in a public administration class I was enrolled in at the time of analysis. For example, one discussion focused on the size of government and how difficult it was to pinpoint responsibility for an initiative to one person in such a large organization. However, this problem is addressed through Ministerial responsibility. Ministerial responsibility means that Ministers are responsible for the decisions made and actions taken in their departments, regardless if they were or were not aware of these decisions and actions. Therefore, while the size of government and the other characteristics of government stand as challenges to implementation, they should not be considered as impassable barriers to a planned change.

The third category, The Current Government's Priorities clarifies that the issues in government that are considered priorities are those that will be realized. The Grid was not considered a priority, whereas eliminating the deficit through down-sizing efforts was considered a priority.

For a long time during analysis, I put a great deal of energy into the down-sizing factor. I tried to develop a sequence, starting with down-sizing, that would explain why the Grid was not a priority. For example, because of down-sizing, there was no time to implement the Grid and thus it was not a priority. However, I realized that I could turn the sequence the other way. For example, because the Grid was not a priority, there was no time to implement it and it was lost in the strategies of down-sizing.

After I had devised numerous sequences, none of which were sound, I realized that many of these factors came together to explain the nature of implementation and that a linear sequence of the factors affecting implementation could not likely be determined. There was not one trigger factor that affected implementation, but a multiplicity of factors that derailed the implementation process. Therefore, I did not spend more time trying to figure out a consecutive process of factors that affected implementation. I found this to be a significant milestone in the analysis process.

The Current Government's Values Concerning Families were revealed in the fourth category. The government's values provide the rationale to justify its decisions affecting families. The main point gathered from this category was that the implementation of the Grid, which proposed to make family concerns central to government decisions, was in complete discord with the values of government on families. The participants were directed to align their actions with the government's values concerning families and thus, were directed away from implementing the Grid.

The factors in this category were first encompassed under the idea of government involvement in family life which was another one of the first ideas to emerge in the data analysis. The idea went through many transitions before it was broken down into the factors describing this category. I found working through and clarifying the idea of government involvement in family life, which resulted in these factors, was one of the most complex and thus, difficult processes that I experienced in data analysis.

The factors within the four categories making up the section on the Provincial Government formed a basis on which the participants determined the amount of energy to allocate to the implementation of the Grid. They also depict the government context as delineated by senior officials' priorities that did not promote, but discredited, involvement with families and in family initiatives.

I found the analysis of this section to be the most intriguing of all sections. It demanded that I dig through and examine the participants' comments from various angles. Unearthing these factors was the most challenging, but also the most rewarding part of the analysis. The analysis involved in the following section was also interesting because participants' comments are specifically connected to the elements of change in the conceptual framework, as described in Chapter Two.

The Elements of Change

The elements of change demonstrate how organizational capacity might have been created to facilitate the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. In reality, the participants identified numerous factors related to these elements that might have actually hindered the implementation of the Grid.

The participants' comments appeared to illuminate four out of the seven elements in the original framework. These were: Naming a Change Agent, Securing Leadership, Building Commitment, and Communicating. The other three elements not specifically referred to by the participants (Planning the change, Convincing of the need for the change, and Choosing incremental change) are included as part of the discussion in the following chapter.

Naming a Change Agent

A change agent has been defined as an individual or group that is responsible for managing a planned change. The Premier's Council was the change agent responsible for managing the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. This category therefore, is important because it captures the participants' opinions about the Council and their conclusions about its ability to direct the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. The participants' comments were organized into three factors that describe the nature of the Council as a change agent: *The Premier's Council is a pet project; The Premier's Council has no power;* and *The Premier's Council is too traditional.*

The Premier's Council is a pet project.

In general, the participants described the Council in a negative, cynical or unfavorable manner. They described it as "unnecessary", "unhelpful", "unwanted", or as a political "pet project" of the former Premier. Consequently, the Premier's Council as a change agent and its initiatives were not welcomed nor respected, which affected the implementation of the Grid.

> **Low**
> Something about these councils in general...I figure its very much a political thing. The former Premier brought the Council for Families in because he believed that families were like bread and butter, or like mother-hood, and by bringing in this wonderful council...he thought he would be doing the right thing.
>
> **High**
> Certainly the Premier's Council was viewed by the community, as well as within government, as a pet project of the former Premier...So there's a tremendous amount of cynicism in the province around the Premier's Council.
>
> **High**
> All it was, was a way to satisfy some politician's dreams.

The Premier's Council has no power.

In addition to being deemed as unnecessary or unwanted, the Premier's Council was also described as having no influence, clout, or power among departments within government. Because the Council had no power within government, it did not have the power needed to influence others to implement the Grid. As one participant stated, "the Council can't really tell us to do this".

> **High**
> A Premier's Council usually doesn't fit into the power structure because usually it's an advisory body to the Premier and the Premier can decide whether to accept or reject that advise.
>
> **High**
> We are separate from the Council and the Council can't really tell us to do this.

> **Other**
> I look at the Premier's Council and I wonder how much it does. Its mandate is to advise government on how policies and programs attacked families. But when they would make advice, it was ignored. The government doesn't have to listen to them. So I start to question why we have it.

The Premier's Council is too traditional.

The Premier's Council was further described by the participants as too traditional. It was seen as working from a traditional position, seeking out traditional opinions, and publishing documents based in a traditional perspective. Since the Council's documents included the Grid and were considered to be promoting the traditional view of the family, the participants who did not share this view were deterred from implementing the Grid.

> **Low**
> There's this notion that women should still be at home and that's really what they should be doing. But if they're in the workplace, then it's at their own peril. This idea is still alive and well. And...some of the publications that have come out of the Premier's Council have been highly questionable in terms of these values. And in their research, their sample selections were atrocious and they pretty much sampled people who gave them traditional stuff. It was really problematic. So the Grid hasn't been embraced.

> **High**
> We are a little more liberal than the perspective coming from the Premier's Council.

Securing Leadership

The element of leadership in the conceptual framework is emphasized as important to the success of a planned change. It is critical because a leader is responsible for creating a vision and building coalitions of people and energizing these people to become and stay committed to the vision (Belasco, 1990; Mohrman, Ledford, & Mohrman, 1989; Nadler & Tushman, 1989).

Four months after the Grid was formally introduced to departments, the Premier under whom the Grid was developed, resigned. His resignation brought about a new Premier with new priorities and a new concept of the role of government.

The participants described, through four factors, how the change in leadership was related to the implementation of the Grid. The factors are: *The leader's priorities are expected to shift; The Grid and the Council belonged to former Premier;* and *The future of the Council may be limited.*

The leader's priorities are expected to shift.

The participants explained that when there is a shift in leadership or even shifts within a department's hierarchy there is generally a shift in priorities. The effect is that "things are not handled in the same way or with the same emphasis".

> **Low**
> Not only when a government changes, but when you get new Ministers and have shifts in Deputies or even Assistant Deputies, you can have a shift in priorities. It's associated with a lot of things: what's on the plate, what seems to be important, what should be done now. And then there are some things that don't take the limelight, they are not handled in the same way or with the same emphasis.
>
> **High**
> Whenever you have a change in leaders, you have a change of agendas and that's gonna have an impact on programs. It would be unrealistic to assume that the status quo would be maintained. You know, you have a new leader. And even so much as a change in a manager, even a low level manager,

> would bring about changes in the office just with procedures and whatever.

The Grid and the Council belonged to former Premier.

The participants across all departments firmly described that they associated the Premier's Council and the Grid with the former Premier. For example, one participant stated that the Grid was "the former Premier's baby. Out he goes, out goes the Grid".

> **Low**
> The Council and Grid were the former Premier's to begin with and then it went no where. And that goes with any sort of pet programs of prior Ministers, they go nowhere in...Cabinet.
>
> **High**
> Everybody saw the former Premier as the one who was pushing family and Family Day and when he left, everyone was wondering what would happen with the Grid and all of this.
>
> **High**
> I think that the former Premier tended to give families a higher profile. Even just the simple matter of making a Family Day, and talking about family things. He wouldn't let you forget that. And so I'm sure that in those days we would have given some attention to the Grid because we heard the Premier talking about it...Whereas today, when we hear the Premier talk we hear about deficit reduction. So this Premier does not pay nearly as much attention to the Council as the former Premier, who founded them did...So they seem like a department with a fancy name.
>
> **Other**
> I was looking over the Grid last night and at the rationales behind all the principles and it was very good, very balanced. It just was not given the priority. It was the former Premier's baby. Out he goes, out goes the Grid. That's kind of the way I look at it.

The future of the Council may be limited.

Because the participants associated the Council and the Grid with the former Premier and understood that the Grid was not his priority, they questioned the new Premier's intentions regarding whether he would disband or maintain the Council. They didn't "know if it would be easy or hard for him to dispose of the Premier's Council on the Family". They also guessed that the Council's future would be determined after the 1994 International Year of the Family concluded. As it happened, the current government disbanded the Premier's Council on June 30, 1995.

> **Low**
> If the Premier's Council stays in existence and if they're endorsed, things may happen...But who knows?
>
> **High**
> The current Premier sees himself as a grass roots kind of guy. It isn't from sophisticated bureaucrats or from people in cities that he considers that he has much support. And the Grid is a grassroots, down-home kind of issue, and so I don't know if it would be easy or hard for him to dispose of the Premier's Council on the family, who knows?
>
> **High**
> It was the fall (*1992*) that we did this departmental review. We were in the midst of it when the former Premier resigned...And I remember sitting down and talking about whether we should do the review or not...In fact we were wondering what's going to happen to the Premier's Council on families. The only thing that we thought was going to save them was International Year of the Family. And maybe that's what did. I don't know, we won't know till next year.

Building Commitment

In the explanation of elements of change in the conceptual framework, commitment to a planned change is considered extremely important for a planned change to be realized. It is done by inviting those whose support is needed for the change to become involved in the decision-making associated with the planned change (Drucker, 1973; Jacques, 1987; Kirkpatrick, 1985; Medina, 1982; Reiner, 1987). Building commitment to a planned change gains support of a larger group to the change, which legitimizes it, and increases the likelihood of its implementation (Kanter, 1984).

The change agent, the Premier's Council, was responsible for building commitment to the planned change. The participants confirmed the importance of having commitment to the Grid, especially senior officials' commitment. This category is made up two factors: *There was no senior commitment;* and *The Grid was middle management's responsibility.*

There was no senior commitment.

The participants were unanimous in stating that senior officials' commitment to a planned change is imperative for a change to occur. They also agreed that there was no commitment to nor support by senior officials for the Grid. One participant explained that overall, there was not the "understanding, commitment and acceptance" of the Grid by senior officials in government. Without this commitment to the Grid, the participants knew they could let "the Grid slip".

> **Low**
> With the Grid, the current Premier is floundering and if the Grid is going to work, you've got to have the support from the highest level. You need support...because you're not going to go anywhere without it. You have to start from the top and get the backing of the right people. So that goes for the Ministerial

> level right down through the departments...because that's the way these things seem to work.
>
> **Low**
> The mandate from the Premier is such that thou will do this and that and not Grid. So it's not taken seriously, there's not the level of commitment needed...How do I say this, you know, you're lucky to have a job. If you don't want it, then just get out. It's inertia. It's this attitude that this *(the Grid)* isn't an important essential management concern. And I guess that's the bottom line.
>
> **High**
> The commitment to the Grid needs to be front and center at the highest level. When there isn't something crucial in importance to the Deputy or A.D.M.'s they will delegate involvement. In this case, there was not an ideal understanding, commitment and acceptance on the part of our senior people. So...to be effective you have to have the commitment at the highest levels so people in the department pay attention to it. If, for example, the interdepartmental committee was made up of Deputies or A.D.M.'s and they had been responsible for developing the Grid and they said "Thou Shalt", there would have been a different response by individual department members. They didn't get the highest level people in our department to work on the Grid report...I am not criticizing any of the individuals who were involved, but that is just one more indication of the lack of importance of the Grid.
>
> **High**
> I've never seen anything come through from the Minister saying this should guide the department's policies. It is just recommended.

The Grid was middle manager's responsibility.

Since senior officials were not interested in, nor committed to the Grid, they delegated the responsibility for the implementation of the Grid to middle managers. The participants described that regardless of the efforts of middle managers, without the commitment of senior officials, change would not occur. One participant explained that "the big people" in the department, the senior officials, would never know if the Grid was or was not being implemented. Another participant explained that middle management is very competent, "but there is a lot more" involved when "we are talking about change and implementing change". "A lot more" to this participant was commitment by senior officials.

> **High**
> It (*the Grid*) was left for people like me to make sure that it's implemented or is reflected in what we do. But for our big people, I don't think they will know if we do it or not.
>
> **High**
> Departments had a tendency to push the Grid off to the side and assign it someone that didn't have a mainstream in the department.
>
> **High**
> I know that there was an attempt by the Premier's Council...to involve the Deputy Ministers, but in our instance, like many others, the meeting held for Deputies was attended by stand-ins, middle management. ... Now that gets at, how critical is this. But if its important, then that message needs to get across to the top level...And its not that stand-ins are not representing our department when they go to a meeting. But there is a lot more when we're talking about change and implementing change.

Communicating

The communication change element is often considered essential to the success of any change (Lippitt, Langseth, & Mossop, 1985). The Premier's Council needed to develop and maintain high levels of communication throughout the implementation of the Family Policy Grid if change to the family policy-making system was to result. This category is therefore important in that it has simple, yet direct implications for the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. The category is described through one factor: *There was minimal communication.*

There was minimal communication.

The participants explained that the Premier's Council was directing the implementation of the Grid with minimal communication. For example, the participants stated that the Grid needed to be "brought up from time to time", it needed to be "regenerated" and the Premier's Council needed to "have more personal contact" with departments. The participants perceived that the Premier's Council did not want to be "the police" in monitoring the implementation of the Grid, thus communication between the Council and departments was minimal.

> **Low**
> The Premier's Council could have more personal contact, more speaking engagements.
>
> **Medium**
> We used to have more frequent Council meetings, but now it has been almost a year since our last meeting. And so when I discussed here about perhaps doing the business plan against the Grid, it was like, what Family Policy Grid?...So I think the Grid needs to be brought up from time to time...because its too easy to lose sight of the Grid's purpose and I have a strong suspicion that part of the Grid is already lost. And as time passes, it will be relying on the Premier's Council to regenerate this thing.
>
> **High**
> I know the Premier's Council didn't get all of the Grid reports in on time, but that's okay, they don't want to be the police in that respect.

Reflections on Implementation: Elements of Change

The participants were frank about their opinions of the Council as a change agent. They believed the Council was the "pet" or token of the former Premier to show the importance attributed to families by government. They did not see the Council as having the power to affect change. It was not seen as fitting into the power structure of government because it was an Advisory Council, with a "fancy name" whose advice could be taken or ignored. As well, the Council was seen as promoting a traditional view of "the family" which was opposed to their more liberal view of families.

The newspaper media also reported the Council as traditional. For example, in 1992, after a person very closely associated with the Premier's Council commented on the differences between single parent and nuclear families, the Edmonton Journal described this person as disrespectful of single parents and supportive of only the nuclear family. The backlash from this article prompted this person to clarify some of the comments. This likely added to the participants' opinions of the Premier's Council as too traditional and to their disregard for the Council as a change agent and thus, deterred them from implementing the Grid.

The massive amount of literature on the topic of leadership emphasizes the importance of leadership in a planned change. The leader of the government, who took on the role of leader of the Grid, resigned during the implementation of the Grid. Therefore, the participants reported that the Grid was a priority particular to the former Premier, but not fundamental nor central to the priorities of the current government (*The Grid and the Council belonged to former Premier*). They perceived that the new leader's priorities shifted away from implementing the Grid. As well, the participants questioned the current Premier's intentions regarding the future of the Council. By questioning the Premier's intentions regarding the fate of the Council, the participants were also questioning the fate and necessity of implementing the Grid. This questioning did not promote continued involvement with the Council nor with the implementation of the Grid.

In addition, the factors regarding the change in leadership confirm the power of the culture of government and senior officials' abilities to make choices to chart the direction of government. In this case, the current Premier chose to change the direction of his government away from the implementation of the Family Policy Grid.

The Securing Leadership category was one of the most frustrating and confusing categories to sort out. The reason was that I first tried to divide participants' comments on the change in leadership into positive, negative and neutral affects on the implementation of the Grid. However, this did not describe anything about the process of implementation. I finally realized that it was not the event of the change in leadership that I should be focusing on; instead, it was important to focus on the participants' opinions of the former Premier and current Premier as leaders of the Grid's implementation. Thus, the participants' opinions were that there was a shift away from the Grid with the new Premier, that the Grid was exclusively the former Premier's, and that participants doubted that the new Premier would maintain the Council and the Grid.

The importance of commitment for any planned change was commented on by an overwhelming number of participants. They commented by explaining how senior commitment was crucial to a planned change, but that there was a lack of senior officials' commitment to the Grid.

Just prior to the start of interviewing in March, 1994, I remember being particularly drawn to an article in a local newspaper. A senior government official at the time was questioned about the effects of deficit cuts on families and the role of the Family Policy Grid. The official was quoted as not even remembering the Grid. I remember wondering if this would be a good predictor of the participants' experiences with senior officials' commitment to the Grid. Although no one specifically mentioned this article, it was clear, according to the participants that senior officials were not committed to the Grid.

In turn, because senior officials were not committed to the Grid, they delegated responsibility for implementation to middle management. This action further demonstrated their lack of commitment. Furthermore, because middle managers adhere to the priorities of senior officials, middle managers received the message that it was not important to commit special energy or attention to the Grid. This attitude posed a barrier to the implementation of the Grid.

Communication also emerged as a very important factor influencing the Grid. The participants described the exchange of information between departments and the Premier's Council as minimal. As time went on, meetings were less frequent and involvement on the Interdepartmental committee was waning. In addition, some departments did not have a person designated as their contact for the Grid and did not "actually participate in anything" regarding the Grid. The participants attributed the minimal communication to the perception that the Council did not want to be viewed as invasive or policing the Grid.

However, it is important to realize perceptions of minimal communication were voiced by the participants approximately two years after the initial introduction of the Grid to departments. The Grid was introduced in May, 1992 and interviews with participants occurred from March, 1994 to November, 1994. According to the history of the Grid in Chapter Four, the Premier's Council was highly involved and communicative with departments in 1992, when the Grid was released and initial implementation reports were being written. Therefore, the participants' experiences of communication with the Premier's Council confirms past research. There is not only a need for high levels of communication during a planned change, but this communication needs to be sustained over time (Kirkpatrick, 1985).

The comments in the Elements of Change section are interesting because they directly reflect the elements identified in the literature on planned change. All change elements could have either facilitated or hindered the planned change. It depended on how the elements were perceived and practiced or brought to bear on the implementation of the Grid. The disregard of the Premier's Council, the past and current Premiers' leadership of the implementation process, and the lack of commitment to and communication throughout the Grid's implementation, acted as barriers to implementing the Grid. In the following section, The Family Policy Grid, participants' comments more specifically address the Grid as an instrument of change.

The Family Policy Grid

This section is very meaningful to the research because the findings directly convey the participants' opinions about the Grid as an instrument for improving and securing supportive policies for families. In turn, the participants' opinions about the Grid as an instrument of change influenced how the process unfolded. The participants' opinions are shared through the following four categories: A View of the Initial Process, The Initial Implementation Results, The Usefulness of the Grid, and A Critique of the Grid.

A View of the Initial Process

After receiving copies of the Grid, each department was to begin implementing the Grid by using it to assess department policies and programs. Results were to be compiled in a departmental report. This category was developed through the participants' comments about what was involved in or what happened during this initial process of implementation. A view of the initial process is made up of three factors: *Values and beliefs are part of the process; Policies for families cannot be designed;* and *The Grid implementation review was a one-time exercise.*

Values and beliefs are part of the process.

The participants described how their *values and beliefs*, particularly related to family, became an intimate part of the implementation process. The participants' *values and beliefs* thereby influenced how they understood and implemented the Grid. The participants stated that depending "on the angle you take" or your "personal view point", policies and programs could have been considered supportive or non-supportive of families.

> **High**
> When I reviewed the Grid, I was thinking of my life and reflected my own personal values.
>
> **High**
> One of the issues with the Grid is that it is very easy for departments to say, yes, our policies and programs do support families because, depending on the angle you take on families, you can do that.
>
> **High**
> I think in many instances there is a personal view point that comes in. So all you can do is look at your programs, and look at what you view the family as being, and try to integrate these to produce valid answers for the department review.

Policies for families cannot be designed.

Directly coming out of the previous factor, the participants described a further problem that appeared in the initial implementation of the Grid. The participants acknowledged that individuals perceive families differently, according to their own values. Thus, the participants stated that families were "indefinable"; they did not believe one definition of the family could be developed. Following, the participants believed that they were unable to use the Grid to develop policies for families because policies cannot be organized around an "indefinable" group.

One participant explained that because of the problems in defining families, "it makes it difficult to do any thing with policy". Another participant stated that because of the various types of families "you're going to get shot down" if you attempt to "do something with policy". Because the participants did not believe policies for families could be designed, they believed using the Grid to assess and develop family policies was inapplicable.

> **High**
> I will have a different interpretation than what other people will have of what a family is. So it makes it difficult to do any thing with policy because who do you listen to? Because no matter what direction you take, you have people saying, no that's wrong.
>
> **High**
> I've been around long enough to have seen various attempts at organizing the work of government. And whenever you try to organize work around an under-differentiated group of people, you cannot do it. It's really the similar problem that the disabled have. I mean people think the disabled are a very coherent group, but they're not, all of them have very different characteristics and needs. You can't organize yourself around groups, you have to organize yourself around needs and service requirements. And if there's no service requirement, then get out of it.
>
> **High**
> A definition of family is not straightforward...We question homosexual families, adopting children, single parents...and

> you don't know where government is coming from, whether they are from the left or right...But to get a definition and do something with policy with all of that, you're going to get shot down, no matter what you come up with, you're shot down.

The Grid implementation review was a one-time exercise.

The participants overwhelmingly described the process of implementation of the Grid as a one-time, "let's get it over with" exercise. They completed the initial Grid review, submitted it to the Council and no further implementation was planned. They approached the review as "let's get this exercise out of the way" and after the review, "it just went on the shelf". This factor directly demonstrates how implementation of the Grid was not only hindered, but blocked by this one-time short-term approach to implementation.

> **Low**
> It (*the implementation report*) basically said, we're already moving in this direction, we're already doing these things. And that was really the extent of it. So far there hasn't been any follow-up and until it's actually requested, there won't be either...Basically what we're saying is, we've done this and we're not doing anything more until we have to.
>
> **High**
> People did it (*the implementation review*), but they did it more as, let's get this exercise out of the way and get onto the stuff that is really important.
>
> **High**
> Well, it wasn't much of an experience for me, probably took about a 1/2 hour altogether.
>
> **High**
> I think the policy Grid is gone, I really do. I mean it was a very short kind of pencil and paper exercise. The report went to Cabinet, ticketyboo. Good. Oh, we're doing fine. Pat ourselves on the back. End of story. Please don't have this come and re-visit us again.

> **Other**
> I see all departments just being inundated with all kinds of paperwork. And to me, it was just another report that you had to go through...And I think that's really what happened, to be honest.

The Initial Implementation Results

After going through the initial process of implementation, departments were asked to submit their results from the process to the Council. This category is extremely interesting because the results provide insight into the relationship participants perceived their departments had with families.

The results emerged in the following three factors: *We already fit with the Grid; We already think about families; and Families are not our main concern.* Notably, these factors were some of the most pervasive in this research.

We already fit with the Grid.

One of the most prevalent factors resulting from the initial review of policies was that participants, from across all departments, concluded that they *Already fit with the Grid.* They believed they already "reflected the values" and "did the things" requested in the Grid. Because they "fit quite well with the Grid", the consequence was that further implementation was deemed unnecessary.

> **Low**
> The implementation report wasn't rocket science. It wasn't anything that was going to have a profound impact on the organization. It basically said, we're already moving in this direction, we're already doing these things. And that was really the extent of it.

Medium
We didn't have much difficulty with how we looked at the Grid because our programs were mostly directed to families.

High
Many of our programs already reflected values that existed within the document, so it wasn't a big deal...So the conclusion from our report was that we really didn't have a lot of change to make because we were focusing on the family perspective already...So the Grid was just a check. It didn't produce any startling revelations in terms of policy.

High
The Grid wasn't really an issue because we weren't really out of line in any of the areas. We didn't have to change anything.

We already think about families.

Aside from fitting with the Grid, the participants concluded that they *Already thought about families.* They believed their departments were concerned about families and were so even before the Family Policy Grid was released. Again, the consequence of this perception by the participants was that further implementation of the Grid was considered unnecessary.

Low
The fact is that in most of the things that we do, we felt like a family situation was generally already taken.

Medium
Even before the Family Policy Grid was implemented, we always had a strong concern for Alberta families.

High
Our department has been kind of innovative over the years in looking at how we can make a difference with families. We recognized a long time ago that family support is very important.

Families are not our main concern.

Although the participants believed that they *Already thought about families,* they did not see *Families as their main concern.* They acknowledged that their work involved or affected families, but making families their main concern was not their "purpose"; "their job" and did not "capture what they do". The Grid, which directly involved departments with families, was not considered to be an important part of their work and thus, implementation of the Grid was not believed to be imperative.

> **Low**
> In the environment today...there is fiscal restraint and shutting down programs...So we are in a time to question what it is the department does and what our purpose is, and that has a different focus than a social portfolio.
>
> **High**
> We're not here to support families. That's not our job. I mean, if we support families in the process, well and good.
>
> **High**
> Our program doesn't deal directly with families...We had a speaker in and he talked about working with families. So when we started the project we didn't have...families in mind, but they certainly are a byproduct.

The Usefulness of the Grid

As recipients of the Grid, participants were expected to implement the Grid to change the policy-making system for families. In response, the participants commented on the usefulness of the Grid as an instrument to improve this system and ultimately, to improve policies for families.

The participants' assessments of the usefulness of the Grid were revealed through the labels they gave to the Grid. The following factors provide the labels and details of why the Grid was not considered a useful change instrument: *The Grid is an add-on; The Grid is just for show; The Grid is good for others; The Grid is for senior officials; The front-line workers are not familiar with the Grid;* and *The Grid is not needed.*

The Grid is an add-on.

The participants perceived that the Grid was an *Add-on* to the work they were already doing. It was a "make work" project. Since "departments are busy" and the Grid was not something that was considered imperative to their work, they did not "spend a lot of time thinking about" the Grid. The assessment of the usefulness of the Grid as an add-on turned participants away from implementing the Grid.

> **Medium**
> Initially when the people were working with the eight principles, there was this feeling that this is just a make work project and they are not really going to see a result out of it. Departments are busy and these sort of things are add-ons.
>
> **High**
> This is an add on. It is not most critical to our life and work and well-being to spend a lot of time thinking about this.
>
> **High**
> I let my department know that they were going to have to allow time in their work plans to build this (*the Grid*)in because it was going to mean a review of all the programs...And there was a lot of concern about that and about the ability to do that and the add-on of, do we need an extra body to actually do that?

The Grid is just for show.

The participants further assessed the Grid as nothing more than a political exercise. They described the Grid as a "joke", "whitewash", or "pencil and paper exercise". The opinion expressed in this factor was quite damaging to the implementation of the Grid. It demonstrates that participants did not find the Grid useful, nor did they consider its implementation seriously.

> **Medium**
> In a couple of meetings, people felt that, is this a joke, is this for real?
>
> **Medium**
> The Grid was just for show. It was the former Premier that wanted to show the importance of the family to the Alberta government and thought the best way would be to set up a special Council and do this Grid thing. It wouldn't necessarily mean that anybody changed anything.
>
> **High**
> For our department, it became more of a pencil and paper exercise...What happened is that it was an exercise between policy makers at the senior bureaucratic level, all of who said that their policies, of course, fit with Grid. So the Grid looks great, it looks fantastic and its an easy whitewash .

The Grid is good for others.

The factor, the *Grid is good for others* , is the second, out of only two factors, that can be differentiated according to departments. The participants only in high departments expressed that the *Grid is good for others.* In assessing the usefulness of the Grid, these participants clearly explained that the Grid may have brought about change, not in their own departments, but in departments that were not commonly related to families. For example, participants spoke of how the Grid was a “useful awareness raising tool” for individuals in non-family related departments and could help to “open the eyes” of individuals in these departments. These participants, therefore did not find the Grid useful and thus, were not motivated to implement it.

> **High**
> The Grid would have been more helpful if it was applied to other departments. The family perspective really had infiltrated in our area, but it might be a useful awareness raising kind of tool for other departments, just, for example, to make them think about how they construct roads may have impacts on families.

> **High**
> The Grid was a particular challenge to departments that were traditionally not, in any way, oriented to families. And I think that was one of the best things that the Grid accomplished. It started to open the eyes, even if it was in a small corner of a department, to the fact that even if you were in...(*a low department*), things you were doing had an impact on families. So the only positive thing about the Grid is that it probably did raise the awareness at some level in some departments that traditionally are not for families.

The Grid is for senior officials.

In this factor, the participants expressed how the Grid, developed to change policies to be more supportive of Alberta families, was designed for use only by senior officials. In contrast, the participants believed that bringing about a change for families comes through the work of front-line workers, those involved in the direct delivery of services. As one participant explained, he did his part, "now it has to go to the people, in...the programs for it to really happen". In addition, one participant explained that implementing the Grid would be no problem because it did not challenge the thinking of the senior officials responsible for implementing it. Therefore, implementing the Grid was not meaningful, nor useful to participants because it was not designed to reach front-line workers, where participants believed change for families occurs.

> **High**
> It (*the Grid*)shouldn't be a government thing; it really has to go down to the field. I've done my part in terms of making sure that our policy conforms with it. Now it has to go to the people in...the programs for it to really happen.

> **High**
> Now I didn't have that much personally to do with applying it (*the Grid*), it tended to stay more at the directors level.

> **High**
> The bottom line is, did this Grid make one bit of difference to any family, any kids, anything, anywhere? Now I would suggest the answer is no...It was designed for senior policy analysts and because it was designed and directed that way, there was no problem implementing it, like it was designed for the structure that actually implemented it. But if that document was designed for families and talked about what really happens to families, at the front level, then there would be things that make it difficult to implement. So if you went out today to any community agency that works in family support and asked them, have you seen any significant change in the last years because of this Grid? I think you would have a very difficult time finding anything.

Front-line workers are not familiar with the Grid.

In keeping with my initial intentions of interviewing senior officials, middle, and front-line managers, front-line managers were contacted about their familiarity with the Grid. Front-line managers confirmed that the Family Policy Grid was a document that was not designed for their use, nor open for their feedback. Consequently, some front-line managers had heard about the Grid, but none had seen nor worked with the Grid. One front-line manager elaborated further to explain that any broad policy framework, like the Grid, would not be used by front-line workers for delivering services. The following is a selection of comments from front-line managers associated with low, medium and high departments.

Low
My area has very much to do with the family, but...nothing I have seen is a result of this Grid and no person has been directed to look after it.

Medium
I squeezed my head for awhile to find out what you were eluding to in your letter and that tells you how light my exposure to the Grid has been. I know what its about from hearing about it, but I have not seen it. So that is really all I know.

Medium
I believe I read something about it in our last newsletter, but that's it.

High
I am aware of the Grid, but I don't know if anyone else would. Just like any broad government policy, we are not using it for delivering services. As soon as you get out into offices, at this level, frankly, many people would be saying, what Policy Grid? They might have seen a copy of it, but its not for their hands-on use.

High
Boy, you got me. I have no idea what that (*the Grid*)is. I usually remember things that pass across my desk, but I don't recall seeing it. But then again, I don't always read everything that I get.

High
I know about it (*the Grid*) only because my office, awhile ago, was situated close to someone who was on the Council's committee and so we would chat about it, but that's all.

The Grid is not needed.

The participants felt they had no need nor use for the Grid as an instrument to bring about change for families. This factor is best described by the participant who simply stated that the Grid "would have been useful for us if we identified that we needed it". Another participant described that people in the department did not see how it would make them more informed or how it would impact their "day to day work". One more participant explained that they "couldn't see a link between what needs to be done and the Grid". The participants' feelings that they had no need for the Grid countered their desire to implement the Grid.

> **Medium**
> The only thing that would impede Grid implementation...is simply a lack of perception of how it would actually impact on our day to day work...We don't relate to it on a day to day basis, by any stretch of the imagination.
>
> **High**
> People wanted to get rid of it (*the Grid*) as soon as possible; they didn't see the value of it. So it wasn't a matter of bureaucratic resistance to something that was worthwhile, because that sometimes happens, the bureaucracy kind of shuts down. It was more a sense of frustration that this was not really something that can be helpful, either at the policy level or with people.
>
> **High**
> I think it (*the Grid)* would have been useful for us if we identified that we needed it. If we, to some extent, said that we need to have this Policy Grid to inform our work...The people who do the work are the ones that are saying...why would I need this? Is this going to make my job easier? Is it going to make me more informed? Is it really going to translate back to families?...I don't think so.
>
> **High**
> We really couldn't see how the Grid was going to be useful. We couldn't see a link between what needs to be done and the Grid.

A Critique of the Grid

The final category includes the participants' comments that refer to and critically describe the nature of the Grid. The comments point directly to how the Grid was written and how this affected its implementation. The comments are developed into three factors: *The Grid is too broad; The Grid is too traditional;* and *The Grid neglects an individual perspective.*

The Grid is too broad.

The participants believed that government policy frameworks, and in this case, the Family Policy Grid, are ineffective because of their broadness. The participants described the Grid using terms such as: "all-encompassing", "broad", "overarching", and "sweeping".

One participant suggested that any document that tries to encompass all situations is difficult to implement. Other participants stated that frameworks like the Grid "don't matter" to anyone and are too broad to address "day to day" business. The participants' understanding that the Grid was too broad for their use discouraged them from implementing the Grid.

> **Low**
> Whenever I've seen projects like that (*the Grid*)try to be all encompassing for all situations, there are problems in implementing it.
>
> **High**
> It's like if this Grid is so narrow as to focus on a traditional view of family, it becomes rejected out of hand because it's so narrow. But because it's broad then it's a "so what" document.
>
> **High**
> I think that general policy frameworks like this (*the Grid*) generally have little impact on program development or on government direction. Like nobody thinks they matter to them...My experience is that other factors tend to roll over these things; they don't carry any momentum.

The Grid is too traditional.

The participants explained that they disapproved of the Grid because they saw it as too traditional or narrow. They saw it as coming from a "conservative, right wing" perspective, which "offended a lot of people" and such a perspective dissuaded them from implementing the Grid.

> **Low**
> The traditional values seems to be embedded in it *(the Grid)* and it offends a lot of people.
>
> **High**
> We define family with a very large, modern definition, more modern than anyone on the stupid committee who did the Grid.
>
> **High**
> This government is very much interested in families and communities taking a tremendous amount of responsibility for the support of each other and so the Grid has some of these very conservative values incorporated into it.
>
> **Other**
> A lot of the principles show...the conservative, right wing. One of the principles talks about how the well-being of society is reflected in ... how strong the family is. And...there's all kind of implications when you start talking about how strong families are. It implies that families needing help are weak...If anything, families that are going through crises and have to get help, must have the courage and strength to do that.

The Grid neglects an individual perspective.

Closely associated with the Grid is too traditional is the third factor, *The Grid neglects an individual perspective*. The participants commented that the Grid "wasn't effective or useful" partly due to its lack of emphasis on the individual. More specifically, participants in high departments explained their need to develop policies and programs in terms of the individual, which was not congruent with the perspective in the Grid. They believed it was important to think of individuals first and write their policies based on individuals. This perceived neglect of the individual perspective deterred the participants from implementing the Grid.

> **High**
> 'The family' is not necessarily the paramount social structure. There are many dysfunctional families that support the maintenance of the system and are destructive to the member. So, that individual component wasn't really in the Grid. And for a lot of our purposes, that wasn't effective for us; it wasn't useful.
>
> **High**
> To have this Grid statement is not realistic. In our work, we first have to think of the impact on the individuals we're supposed to serve, and then maybe, somewhere down the line, the impact on families.
>
> **High**
> There was concern with the focus on the family being more important than the individual.

Reflections on Implementation: The Family Policy Grid

In the category, A View of the Initial Process, the participants revealed a great deal about their perceptions regarding the process of implementation. The participants described, in the first factor *Values and beliefs are part of the process,* how individuals' values and beliefs were explicitly tied to anything involving families, whether it was implementing the Grid, or defining families, or developing family policies. Closely related to this factor was the participants' perceptions that *Policies for families cannot be designed.* These factors are some of the most discerning in this research. They are rooted in the timeless debate of how to define a family. The participants explained that individuals' differing perceptions of family made it impossible to define family and therefore, also impossible to design policies for families.

In addition, the participants made it very clear through the factor, *The Grid implementation review was a one-time exercise* that although they completed the initial implementation review, no continued nor future action for the use of the Grid was planned. The decision to make the review a *One-time exercise* connects back to the culture of government. Since senior officials did not choose the Grid as a priority of government and were not committed to it, participants *Followed senior officials' priorities* by focusing on priority issues and ignoring the implementation of the Grid. Furthermore, the Grid review as a *One-time exercise* was one of the most common factors in this research. This demonstrates that the neglect of on-going implementation of the Grid across government was pervasive.

Through the factor, *One-time exercise,* I recall the time just before I began interviewing. I thought that due to the past neglect of implementation, the participants may not have known how to implement the Grid. I thought that they may have lacked the skills to implement. Consequently, when the Grid was given such a quick overview and determined to be a *One-time exercise*, I was further convinced that the participants did not have the "know-how" to implement. I then began asking the participants about their ability to implement the Grid. This hypothesis was quickly dismissed after each participant confidently stated that they could or that they had the skills to implement the Grid.

In the category, The Initial Implementation Results, the participants reported the results of the initial review process. Their results included that they already operated in a manner that reflected the Grid principles and already thought about families; their prior concern and support for families were separate from the Family Policy Grid.

As a conclusion of these results, participants did not believe they had to change their policies to make them supportive of families. However, when departments were requested to review their policies using the Grid, they did not have to demonstrate how conclusions were reached. They did not have to explain the process of how decisions were made and thus, did not have to explain how they determined that they *Already fit with the Grid* and how they *Already thought about families.*

I detailed in my journal a time when I became quite frustrated with the comments that emerged into the factor, *Already think about families.* The idea I was hearing was that thinking about or being aware of families was satisfactory for change. I was frustrated because I knew that simply thinking about or being aware of families was insufficient for change; rather, deliberate actions are necessary to bring about a change in policy-making for families. Furthermore, it was even more frustrating acting as a researcher and not being able to explain to participants how I felt.

In addition, a surprise came in the third conclusion, *Families are not our main concern.* It was expected that this factor would have been differentiated according to low, medium and high departments, yet participants from all departments reported that *Families were not their main concern.* Notably, the participants in high departments, those categorized as being highly related to families, stated that *Families were not their main concern.* This perception, which detaches departments from concern for families has serious overall consequences for family policy-making in government.

The main notion coming out of the category, Usefulness of the Grid, is that participants did not believe the Grid instrument could bring about a change in policies for families. The participants believed *The Grid was an add-on* or extra to their work that was truly important and that *The Grid was not needed.* These factors connect back to the factor on down-sizing. During a time of radical change and new priorities, an extra "make-work" project or a project participants had no need for was very likely considered irrelevant. More importantly, the participants did not believe that this extra work would bring about change for families. In addition, *The Grid is just for show* demonstrates participants' perceptions of the Grid as a showpiece or facade and not as an instrument that could direct policy changes.

The negative opinions about the Grid were exacerbated further by the third factor, *The Grid is good for others,* in which the participants in high departments saw the Grid as valuable only to departments that were less related to families. I was quite surprised when this factor emerged, not because it was a confusing idea to grapple with but on the contrary, how clearly the factor emerged. The participants were very candid and very pointed about others' needs for the Grid. I felt that this view was quite presumptuous, although I realized that it may be serving a purpose for participants. Recommending the Grid to other departments may have been a way to shift the responsibility and avoid the changes that would have accompanied implementing the Grid.

The fact that the Grid was designed for senior officials proves to be a very critical factor in this research. The participants asserted that the Grid should not have been a document for senior officials, but should have been used by front-line workers if it was to make a difference to families. The participants proposed that because senior officials did not have to share any decision-making with front-line workers, change would not occur.

The emergence of this factor prompted me to contact front-line workers. Interviewing front-line workers not only contributed to data triangulation, but by this point, also satisfied my growing curiosity about the experiences of front-line workers. I contacted former participants and asked if they could recommend front-line workers that may have been familiar with the Grid. In telephone interviews with these individuals, I learned of their unfamiliarity with the Grid. In addition, I realized that I had reached a point where sampling participants was becoming redundant. Each front-line person I spoke with recommended that I speak with someone else that would be more familiar with the Grid. In all cases, the person they recommended was a former participant. This confirmed that, undoubtedly, the Grid was to be implemented without input from front-line workers.

Through these factors in the category, The Usefulness of the Grid it became remarkably apparent that the participants needed to understand how the Grid would make a difference to families before they would take it and its implementation seriously.

In the last category, A Critique of the Grid, the participants described a few characteristics of the Grid that influenced its implementation. First, the participants believed *The Grid was too broad* or encompassing of all policies so that implementing the Grid, for them, was meaningless. This factor was teased out quite easily. The other two factors in this section, *The Grid is too traditional* and *The Grid neglects an individual perspective* were, for a long time, encompassed under the one factor *Too traditional.* It took more interviews for me to hear how important participants believed the individual perspective was to departments' policy development and service delivery. The participants believed they needed to think according to the individual perspective to carry out their daily work. Thus, these last two factors were separated after I could distinguish the individual factor hiding with the overall traditional factor. This final section describing The Process and Results of Initial Implementation, The Usefulness of the Grid, and A Critique of the Grid, provided a comprehensive picture of the factors specific to the Grid that affected its implementation.

Summary

This chapter includes the factors that emerged from the analysis of the participants' comments. They describe participants' experiences implementing the Family Policy Grid in a government context. The factors provide the meaning behind the participants' decisions to avoid investment toward implementing the Grid. The most distinct factors from these findings that influenced participants' decisions about implementation are explored in the following chapter. These particular factors are linked with the elements of change described in Chapter Two to best describe the nature of the implementation of the Family Policy Grid.

Chapter Six

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

There are times during the research process "when everything falls into place" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 101). After months of thinking about the problem and collecting and analyzing the data, everything can come together to "form a coherent and often cogent picture of what is happening" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 101). The discussion that follows highlights how the findings in Chapter Five came together to form a picture of the implementation of the Family Policy Grid in government.

The picture that emerged from the data depicts implementation as a process that was stalled or frozen in place, in other words, "implementation stalemated." This title describes the process because even though implementation began, it could not proceed or advance. Several factors created barriers that stalemated the implementation of the Grid from very early in the process. Thus, the factors provide insight into the meaning behind the participants' decisions to move away from implementing the Grid, which resulted in the implementation stalemate.

The picture of this unique implementation process is sharply detailed by contrasting it with the conceptual framework, outlined in Chapter Two. This framework was constructed using seven elements considered necessary for facilitating a planned change in government. All seven elements were important and contributed to an understanding of how the Grid was implemented in the Alberta government. However, a great deal of abstracting, integrating, and synthesizing occurred during the analysis of the data and when the dust settled, the analysis revealed that five out of the seven elements contributed most to explaining what happened and which distinct factors intervened during the implementation process: Naming a change agent, Securing leadership, Planning a change, Convincing of the need for the change, and Building commitment.

In addition to a discussion of the five most salient elements, a discussion of the Grid as an instrument of change is included. The participants' opinions of the Grid as an instrument of change also affected and intervened in the implementation process. This discussion is important because it specifically reflects the barriers associated with policy-making for families and what participants described as blocks to developing supportive policies for families in government. For clarification purposes, any reference to "the elements" throughout the discussion includes the Grid as an instrument of change. In other words, the policy instrument itself became an element important to facilitating a planned change in a government context.

A further analysis of the elements revealed two main themes. The first theme is the influence of the culture of government and the power of senior officials. The elements encompassed in this theme are: Naming a change agent, Securing leadership, and Planning the Change. The second theme is a lack of congruency among value systems. The elements encompassed in this theme are: Convincing of the need for change, Building commitment, and the Family Policy Grid as an instrument of change. These themes explain in the most succinct way what stalemated the implementation of the Grid at the middle management level. They assist in understanding the stalemate of the implementation of the Grid in a more discerning or artful way. In other words, if asked to summarize what affected the nature of the implementation of the Grid, the summary would include first, the power of senior officials to determine the priorities of government and second, the lack of congruence between the value systems of senior officials in the current government and the planned change.

This chapter is organized according to each theme and the elements of change through which each theme flows, and it concludes with implications from the research. Furthermore, since a common understanding of the stalemate of the Grid's implementation was shared among the participants in this study, the discussion and implications of this research are not intended for individuals in any one particular government group (low, medium, high, or other). Instead, the discussion and implications are intended for individuals throughout government as well as for anyone interested in policy-making for families, including scholars and individuals in families.

The Alberta Family Policy Grid: Implementation Stalemated

Theme: Power of Senior Officials

The culture of government is made up of norms that govern the behavior of people. The power of senior officials to determine the priorities of government and dictate the behaviours of bureaucrats is the prevailing norm within the culture of government. Senior officials use their power to choose among issues, to establish priorities, and, in doing so, choose to embrace different values. Therefore, understanding the power of senior officials in government is fundamental to understanding all of the decisions that are made in government and what contributed to the stalemate of the Grid implementation process. The terms used throughout this discussion to support this theme are senior officials' power, power-holders, the power structure, or, simply, power. The power of senior officials emerges as a key theme in the discussion of each of the following elements.

Naming a change agent.

The change agent has a very important role. It is responsible for managing a planned change by involving and working through others to achieve the goals of a planned change (Benveniste, 1989). It is the doer; it gets things done.

The participants in this study did not see the Premier's Council as an effective change agent because they did not consider it, nor any type of advisory group, as part of the power structure of government. The participants knew that an Advisory Council was not a power-holder and that acting upon directions from an Advisory Council was not critical. Therefore, it is astonishing, given the breadth of change expected by the implementation of the Grid that an Advisory Council was named the change agent. That is, an Advisory Council was given full responsibility for implementing the Grid when it was known throughout government that an Advisory Council does not have the power to bring about a significant change.

Vanderpost (1992) discovered a similar situation in her study of the implementation of the employment equity policy at the University of Alberta. She notes that the most widely known, fundamental management principle includes assigning responsibility for change to a person or group who has sufficient authority to accomplish a change. In her study, implementing the equity policy change was entrusted to an individual serving in an advisory capacity without the authority to carry it through. Therefore, not only was it commonly known by individuals in government that an Advisory Council did not have the power to direct a change process, but this has been demonstrated in previous research. Entrusting the responsibility of implementation of the Grid to an Advisory Council created, from the start, a significant barrier to implementation.

Another very important point, although not as obvious, is that many of the participants predicted a temporary life for the Council. Temporary structures might lack any real power in government. As a temporary structure, the participants stated that the Premier's Council lacked power, which may have been another reason that participants saw the Council as an ineffective change agent. Therefore, if individuals in government are certain that a change agent is going to disappear within a few years, it becomes easier to ignore or take minimal action to appease a change agent until the change agent and in all likelihood, its initiatives are terminated. This part of the discussion raises a question: "What is the relationship between the implementation of a policy and the permanence of the structure responsible for directing the implementation of the policy?"

It appears that the lack of power of the change agent affected accountability for implementing the Grid. The reporting line from departments to the Premier's Council did not warrant accountability because the Council did not fit into the power structure of government. Answering to the Premier's Council regarding the Grid was trivial in comparison to answering to power-holding senior officials whose priorities did not include the Grid. Since the accountability for the Grid was directed to the Premier's Council, there was no incentive for participants to explain the process they used to implement the Grid.

It is evident that establishing an Advisory Council for a limited period of time sends a clear message to a government's bureaucracy: that is, it is not necessary to take an Advisory Council too seriously, and it is not necessary to spend too much time on its initiatives. Thus, it appears that the relative lack of power of the Premier's Council, the change agent, contributed to the stalemate of the implementation of the Grid. In a culture where power-holding positions dictate the direction and priorities of government, the significance of having a senior official as a power-holding change agent responsible for a planned change cannot be overestimated.

Securing leadership.

Securing leadership follows the discussion of Naming a change agent because both elements deal with organizing individuals or groups with power to facilitate a planned change. The role of the leader is symbolic; whereas, the role of the change agent is the day-to-day manager of the change. The leader envisions the change. The leader energizes people to become and stay committed to the planned change (Mohrman, Ledford, & Mohrman, 1989; Nadler & Tushman, 1989). The implementation of the Grid lacked leadership in both the former and current governments, but for two very different reasons.

The former Premier chose to take on the leadership role, but interestingly, he could not energize his senior officials to become committed to the Grid. He was unable to provide government with a vision of policy-making focused on families and his senior officials chose to ignore his support of the Grid. There are three situations that may explain why senior officials chose to ignore the former Premier's leadership of the implementation of the Grid.

The first situation involves the Deputy Ministers' orientation. This orientation was designed to introduce the government's Deputy Ministers to the Grid, but it was primarily attended by middle managers, who represented their Deputies. The Deputy Ministers' lack of interest in the Grid demonstrates that senior officials had very little interest in the Grid from as early as its first introduction to government. Since the former Premier resigned four months after the Deputy Ministers' orientation, it is likely that the former Premier's senior officials did not attend the orientation because they expected his resignation and were anticipating a shift in leadership. If senior officials expected a shift in leadership, it would not have made sense to put energy into a planned change that might be disregarded within a few months.

The second situation that provides evidence that the former Premier's leadership of the Grid was ineffective involves the initial implementation reports. These reports were submitted within two to six months after the former Premier resigned as a *One-time exercise*. After the Premier resigned, the Grid was left without any leadership. This lack of leadership made it possible for those responsible for implementing the Grid to shirk this responsibility. By designating the initial report as a *One-time exercise*, they made it clear that they had, by that time, decided not to continue implementing the Grid.

The participants may have considered the Grid as a *One-time exercise* because they stated that policy frameworks, in general, are ineffective for bringing about change. They stated that policy frameworks are *too broad* and do not impact on day-to-day business: They "don't matter" to anyone. Consequently, the Grid might have been discussed as another policy framework that was ineffective for bringing about change. Thus, senior officials may not have taken the Grid or its leadership seriously.

The third situation involves the senior officials' view that the Grid was a personal, idiosyncratic initiative associated exclusively with the leadership of the former Premier. Participants viewed the Grid as well as the focus on families and the establishment of the Council to be the former Premier's pet projects or personal priorities. Since the participants considered the Grid as a product out of the Premier's personalized focus on families, they did not view it as an appropriate government activity. The senior officials did not deem it necessary to put any energy into a policy framework that was considered a personal pet project and would likely be disregarded in a few months.

It is noteworthy that the former Premier's senior officials ignored his leadership of the Grid. This is surprising since ignoring the wishes of the most powerful person in the Alberta government is an extreme and an exceptional circumstance. This situation reveals that the leadership of a planned change, when the leadership of government may be shifting, is tenuous. At the time of a shift in leadership, senior officials may hold more power than the out-going Premier. Therefore, as senior officials get ready for a new leader and new priorities, any decisions made or supported by the out-going Premier could be questioned or put aside. If the decisions by the out-going Premier do not seem appropriate and/or seem likely to be changed by the in-coming Premier, senior officials might choose to ignore the decisions of the out-going Premier. In this case, senior officials chose to disregard the Premier's leadership of the Grid which stalled the implementation of the Grid.

After the former Premier resigned, the current Premier did not assume leadership of the implementation of the Grid. Although the current Premier signed the Grid, declaring it to be a part of the government's policy-making process, it was obvious to the participants that this Premier would not act as the symbolic leader of the planned change. It was evident that his leadership priorities were focused on deficit-elimination strategies. Because of the participants' perceptions of the lack of leadership by both the former and current Premiers the stalemate of the implementation process was inevitable.

This situation reiterates the tremendous amount of power held by senior officials and demonstrates that this power might even be more influential during a shift in the leadership of a government. As well, it demonstrates that the timing of a change is important. It is appears to be pointless for a Premier to introduce or support a significant change in government when there is an impending shift in a government's leadership.

Planning the change.

Senior officials' power also explains an important part of the element Planning a change. Planning a change involves conscious, deliberate, and intended ways to bring about change (Bennis, Benne, & Chin, 1985). The Premier's Council incorporated many activities into its implementation plan to set the stage for the implementation of the Family Policy Grid, as highlighted in Chapter Four. For example, planning for the change involved setting up the Lieutenant Governor's Conference, from which the Grid emerged. As well, planning involved establishing the interdepartmental committee, made up of middle managers, who were expected to handle the implementation of the Grid in departments.

However, the participants stated that implementing the Grid or assessing if and how policies supported families were activities planned and designed solely for senior officials and/or policy-makers, and stated that this plan was not enough to bring about a change in the family policy-making system. The participants stated that to be serious about changes in family policy-making it was important to include front-line workers in the implementation of the Grid.

The participants emphasized the importance of involving front-line workers because of front-line workers' immediate relationships with families. Front-line workers hear, first-hand, about the challenges and the needs of families. Berman (1978) calls front-line workers "street-level bureaucrats": That is, they are the individuals who are actually responsible for the direct delivery of services to families. Therefore, the participants stated that implementation of the Grid needed to go beyond the senior and middle management levels. The participants recognized the need for a more comprehensive or shared approach to the implementation of the Grid.

A shared approach to the implementation of the Grid would have involved a working relationship between senior officials and/or policy-makers and front-line workers in assessing if and how policies supported families. In a shared approach, planning would have involved thinking about how the change was to flow from the upper levels of government to the front-line and, ultimately, to families, and would have allowed input from front-line workers and families. This shared approach would have created a system of checks and balances. Front-line workers would have been able to monitor the decisions made about families by senior officials and/or policy-makers. In addition, families in the community would have been able to put pressure on government to use the Grid and would have been in a position to monitor any changes resulting from its implementation. There can be no pressure from front-line workers or from families if they are not aware of a planned change. Therefore, not involving or sharing the decision-making power with front-line workers enabled decision-making for families to go unchecked. This allowed senior officials to continue to dominate policy decisions for families. It maintained the dominating top-down approach to policy-making typical of most governments.

Therefore, although the idea for the Grid might have come from the community and implementation involved the interdepartmental committee, the participants perceived that this involvement was meaningless because senior officials were still in control of and had absolute power over policy decisions concerning families. Because the participants determined, after receiving the Grid, that implementation did not involve a shared approach with front-line workers, they concluded that the Grid could not achieve its stated objectives of changing the policy-making system for families. This conclusion reached by middle managers contributed to the stalemate. There seems to be little doubt that for a planned change to be successful in government it is necessary to incorporate a shared approach among senior officials and/or policy-makers and front-line workers. This observation raises a question for future research: "How would the implementation of a policy framework unfold if front-line workers were actively involved in its implementation?"

Summary: The Impact of the Power of Senior Officials

In order to understand how to successfully implement a planned change such as the Grid, it is necessary to examine the flow of the senior officials' power through three of the seven elements involved in facilitating a planned change: Naming a change agent, Securing leadership, and Planning a change. An examination of the senior officials' role in implementing the Grid reveals five components necessary to ensure that senior officials do not hinder the facilitation of a planned change.

First, although the Premier's Council was not respected as a change agent, Naming a change agent remains important in facilitating a planned change. The participants made it very clear that the change agent needs to hold a power position within the government to ensure that the bureaucracy complies with the change. Consequently, in order to facilitate a planned change, the change agent must hold real power.

Second, a change agent should be part of a permanent structure in government. A permanent structure might fit into the power structure of government and as a result, it would provide the change agent with the power necessary for implementing a change.

Third, an accountability system should be built into a planned change process. Reporting lines should be set up so that the individuals involved in the change answer to a power-holder. Such a system would increase accountability and make it difficult to stray away from implementation plans.

Fourth, a planned change should not be introduced when the leadership of a government is in transition. In particular, change should not be introduced nor led by the Premier or anyone closely associated with the Premier when the leadership of government is shifting. At this time, senior officials appear to have a large amount of power and the ability to ignore the decisions made by the out-going Premier.

Fifth, front-line workers are the link between government policies and those affected by the policies. In the participants' opinions, decision-making for policies that affect families should be shared among front-line workers and senior officials and/or policy-makers. The inclusion of front-line workers is necessary to ensure that a change does not become an easy "pencil and paper" exercise for senior officials, and to ensure that decisions made by senior officials are monitored by front-line workers and, by extension, the community. Therefore, a planned change for families should be directed by a permanent, power-holding change agent, it should be shared with front-line workers and the community, and should not be introduced when the leadership of government is in transition.

Theme: Lack of Congruence Between Value Systems

The implementation of the Grid was stalemated because of a lack of congruence between the value systems of senior officials in the current government and the value system embedded in the planned change. There was a lack of fit between what is (the values embraced by senior officials in the current government) and what should be (the changes proposed though the planned change). The situations that describe the clash are best discussed using the elements, Convincing of the need for change and Building commitment. In addition, a lack of congruence among value systems can also be distinguished in the discussion of the Family Policy Grid as an instrument of change.

Convincing of the need for the change.

The lack of congruence among value systems was apparent in the element, Convincing of the need for the change. According to the literature on planned change, the need for a change "must be felt by the people whose energy is required for the change to happen" (Barrett & Cammann, 1984, p. 10). Therefore, senior officials and others responsible for implementing the Grid needed to consider it essential to their overall policy-making for families. They needed to believe that the Grid was an important part of their total agenda. There are many examples demonstrating that the participants were not convinced of the need for change and they did not believe others were convinced of the need for the change.

The participants described how the values and assumptions of the power-holders in the current government were antithetical to the values and assumptions embedded in the Grid. Because the values held by the senior officials were legitimized and protected by the culture of government, even if the participants did not agree with the decisions resulting from this value position, they had to *toe this line*. Consequently, the Grid's implementation was stalemated.

More specifically, the current government's senior officials took a traditional position on families. This value position maintains that families and government should be distinct: that is, *families should be responsible for themselves*. The underlying assumptions are that families can support themselves and if they experience difficulty, they are simply not choosing to support themselves. As a result of this position, it could be argued that government should not provide, for example, particular health, education or social services because people can turn to their families for this type of support.

The traditional view supports the idea that families should assume full responsibility for themselves, and government should remain disconnected unless the case is extreme (Lerno & Kyle, 1991). Authors who have written on this topic state that proponents of the traditional view believe that governments should not be involved in family functions (Kieren, 1994). Proponents believe that family matters are private, and governments should respect this privacy by not becoming involved with families (Spakes, 1983).

Through this traditional position, senior officials of the current government did not embrace a direct or involved relationship between government and family. Consequently, the participants of this study were implementing the Grid in a context that expected a distinct separation between government and family. The message being sent to implementers of the Grid from senior officials was that families can and will be better off if they look after themselves.

In contrast to the values of senior officials in the current government, the Grid was based on the idea that government should be involved in a direct and conscious relationship with families. The Grid was to change the policy-making system so that families were at the forefront of policy-making. It was to ensure that policies encouraged healthy family functioning. The assumptions embedded in Grid were that families are the cornerstone of our society, and government has a responsibility to support and make families a priority. Another assumption embedded in the Grid was that government has an impact on families: That is, families and government are not distinct. Thus, the values and assumptions of senior officials in the current government clashed with the values and assumptions embedded in the Grid.

The implementation literature adds to the analysis of this clash. Many scholars propose that how an organization's values and assumptions or, more formally, its philosophy and mandate fit with a proposed policy will affect the policy's implementation (Alexander, 1985; Berman, 1980; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989). If philosophies are incompatible, then implementation will not be supported (Love & Sederberg, 1987). This helps to explain why the lack of congruency between senior officials' values and assumptions and the purpose of the Grid stalemated its implementation.

Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) employ a causal theory to describe policy implementation. To them, a causal theory illustrates the cause, the need, or the rationale for the policy. They state that if individuals accept the causal theory the likelihood of the policy's implementation will increase. The "causal theory" behind the need for the Grid was that families are "the single greatest influence on our lives, shaping who we are, how we feel about ourselves and how we approach the challenges of life...Government policies must be assessed to ensure that they encourage healthy family functioning" (Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1992a). According to senior officials of the current government, this causal theory was not valid. They strongly supported familial self-sufficiency and nongovernment involvement in families. Since the theory behind the Grid lacked congruency with the government's values, it is not surprising that the implementation of the Grid was halted. As well, the senior officials' ideas about the relationship between government and families helps to explain why individuals in government were not convinced of the need for the Grid.

The fact that the bureaucracy was not convinced of the need for the change is apparent in its comments about the usefulness of the Grid: For example, *We already fit with the Grid; We already think about families; Families are not our main concern; The Grid is an add-on; The Grid is not needed;* and *The Grid is just for show.* The overwhelming message as illustrated by these comments was that the participants did not believe they had to change their policy-making in order to ensure support for families. They did not think the Grid offered them anything new in their approach to family policy-making, and thus, they were not convinced of the need for the change. Therefore, making these assessments about the usefulness of the Grid, the participants detached or distanced themselves from the task of implementing the Grid; and in detaching themselves from the implementation of the Grid, the participants adhered to the values of the current government. This clash between the purpose of the Grid, to change policy-making for families, and the current government's belief that policy-making for families did not need to be changed had an obvious result: implementation stalemated.

The stalemate can be partly explained through the implementation literature. For example, Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) conclude that the more behavior change required through the implementation of a policy, the less likely it will be implemented. In addition, Coombs (1980) concludes that implementation may be affected simply because the new policy requires adaptation. Therefore, it is likely that the participants found it easier to make statements explaining that they did not need to change their policy-making for families than to undergo the adaptation necessary to implement the Grid. Thus, there was a clash between maintaining the status quo and changing the policy-making system for families.

The choice to maintain the status quo is confirmed by comments made by two participants. These two participants did not trust that all departments fit with the Grid or thought about families. They explained that their peers would claim a fit with the Grid because no one would conclude, in a report that was being submitted to Cabinet, the highest power-holding group, that a department's policies did not support families. These two participants perceived the entire implementation process and report to Cabinet as an in-house exercise for departments to "pat themselves on the back," to justify that their policies did support families, and, in effect, to maintain the status quo. Consequently, any further implementation of the Grid was stalemated. Since the participants stated, in various ways, that they did not believe they had to change their policy-making for families, they were very likely complying with the current government's value position that government should have little involvement in family life. On the other hand, senior officials and participants might have truly believed their policies supported families and their relationship with families was sufficient and satisfactory.

It is possible that the bureaucracy and senior officials lacked an understanding about the relationship between government and families. It is possible that those assessing the policies might not have realized that policies have not only direct and intended, but indirect and unintended impacts on families. A policy that may seem to be far removed from families might have significant impacts on family functioning. The bureaucrats who stated that their departments were not concerned with families might not have understood the ripple affects of their policies on families. Furthermore, the participants in high departments might not have fully understood their departments' relationships with families since they believed that *government should not be involved with families.* Thus, the perceived impact of a department's policies on families might have been very different from the actual impact.

This possible lack of understanding about the relationship between departments' policies and families helps explain why the bureaucracy was not convinced of the need to change its policy-making for families. Furthermore, ignoring the Grid sustains the current government's position that government and families are distinct. Consequently, before changes to government policies for families can be realized, individuals in government must understand the relationship between a department's policies and families.

Building commitment.

To facilitate the implementation of the Grid, it was important for the Premier's Council to involve senior officials and bureaucrats in the change and by doing so build feelings of ownership, responsibility, and, ultimately, commitment to the change (Drucker, 1973; Jacques, 1987; Kirkpatrick, 1985; Medina, 1982; Reiner, 1987). However, senior officials were not committed to the implementation of the Grid, and they did not consider the implementation of the Grid a priority. The reasons for the lack of senior officials' commitment are numerous, many of which have already been mentioned. For example, senior officials were not committed to the implementation of the Grid because it was monitored by an Advisory Council, the Grid and the Advisory Council were the Premier's pet projects, the Premier was resigning, and the Grid did not fit with their position on families.

In addition, the lack of senior commitment had consequences for commitment among bureaucrats. As reflected in the culture of government, it is clear that the meaning behind bureaucrats' behaviour is embedded in the power of senior officials over bureaucrats. The participants acted according to the directions of their power-holding senior officials, directions that did not include implementation of the Grid; and as a result, implementation was stalemated early in the process.

The most striking example, however, that explains the lack of commitment among senior officials and bureaucrats is found by examining the values and assumptions underlying the current government's priority of deficit elimination. The assumptions underlying radical deficit elimination are best described using the phrase, "extra versus essential". It is possible that senior officials and others were not committed to the Grid because providing support for families may have been considered and "extra". Concern for families could have been considered a luxury at a time of budget cuts, reduction in staff, and department mergers. Acting on behalf of families might have even been considered frivolous. On the other hand, taking steps to eliminate the deficit might have been considered essential to the well-being of individuals and essential for government survival and the future of the province. Two quotes from the media reflect these assumptions. In response to the budget cuts to municipalities, universities, hospitals, and schools, all of which affect families, the Alberta Report remarked, "When *the current Premier* is done, Alberta will look like it did before Lougheed—fewer services, no waste, a stronger work ethic and lower taxes" ("The once and future province," 1993). In addition, a person closely associated with the Premier's Council stated that "a budget cut may directly make families suffer, but less government spending is generally good for families" (Lisac, 1993).

These quotes reflect the idea that down-sizing strategies were necessary for the survival of the province and that through these strategies families would benefit. The "services" and "waste" being cut by this government appear to have included the Family Policy Grid and its intended purpose of ensuring that policies for families were encouraging, fair, and supportive. Thus, the assumptions about eliminating the deficit were congruent with the power-holding senior officials' view that families should be self-sufficient. However, there was another clash between the assumptions of the current government, which considered support for families as "extra" or nonessential, and the Grid, in which government support for families was fundamental.

The literature on resource allocation helps to explain deficit elimination strategies. The scarcity of resources makes it necessary to set priorities and, accordingly, make decisions about where to allocate resources (Cutt & Tydeman, 1980; Majone, 1989). As discovered, the priorities of the current government did not include the implementation of the Grid, and as a result, the necessary resources were not allocated to its implementation. However, the literature points out that the necessary resources, including human as well as monetary resources, must be available for the implementation of policies to occur (Browne & Wildavsky, 1984; Cutt & Tydeman, 1980; Edwards, 1980; Majone, 1989; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989; O'Toole & Montjoy, 1984; Scheirer, 1981; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). If carrying out the dictates of a policy demands unavailable funds, skills, time, or energy, then implementation will be hindered (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989; Nagel, 1990), as was the case with the implementation of the Family Policy Grid.

The literature that discusses commitment to a planned change and the strategies targeted at building commitment in the implementation plan outlined in Chapter Four, led me to believe that Building commitment would have been a particularly important and significant element to explain the implementation of the Grid. I was surprised when another element Convincing of the need for the change appeared as a better explanation of the implementation process of the Grid. It is likely that because individuals in government were not convinced of the need for the change, commitment to the change could not be built. Although the elements did not unfold in a linear fashion, it is important to understand that if individuals do not accept the "causal theory" or rationale and do not think the change is needed building commitment is much more difficult and might even be impossible. Thus, specific attention should be given to Convincing of the need for the change in a planned change in government.

The Family Policy Grid: An instrument of change

The lack of congruence between the government's value system and the value system embedded in the Grid also helps to explain the ineffectiveness of the Grid as an instrument of change. The participants considered the Grid in two ways. First, the participants did not consider the Grid an effective instrument because it was a policy framework or metapolicy. They explained that the broadness inherent in policy frameworks means that frameworks "don't matter" to anyone. As well, the participants specifically explained that because the Grid was so broad they relied on personal values and beliefs to make decisions about whether policies fit or did not fit with the Grid, which resulted in a very inconsistent assessment of policies across government.

Consequently, because the Grid was perceived to be too broad and too embracing of all policies, the Grid might not have challenged the participants to ask precise or discriminating questions about policies and how they affected families. As a result, most policies assessed through the Grid could have been considered supportive of families. Therefore, the Grid as a policy framework was too broad and too elusive to challenge the participants to change their policies for families, which contributed to the stalemate of its implementation.

The literature assists in clarifying why the Grid was considered to be too broad or elusive and, ultimately, ineffective. Numerous researchers have found that a policy's language is sometimes ambiguous or unclear which affects interpretation and implementation of a policy (Coombs, 1980; Edwards, 1980; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989; Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980). Closely related to the ambiguity of the policy is the amount of discretion involved in its implementation: The more ambiguous the policy, the more discretion allowed in its implementation (Palumbo & Harder, 1981; Rawson, 1981). The ambiguity in the Grid and the great deal of discretion involved in the process of assessing policies invited various interpretations, which were based on various value systems. The ambiguity in the Grid did not challenge the participants to change family policies and the family policy-making system in government.

Second, the participants did not consider the Grid an effective policy instrument because they did not believe policies could be designed or organized around families. They doubted or questioned the actual notion of family policy. To the participants, family policy was more of a theoretical concept than a practical process. In theory, family policies could be designed, but in practice, because of the many family forms, participants did not think that family policies could be designed. In contrast, the participants stated that policies, including ones that affect families, needed to be designed or organized around individuals. Again, values and perspectives clashed. The family perspective that informed the Grid was incongruent with the individual perspective the participants felt needed to be used in designing policies for families.

More specifically, values and perspectives clashed because the participants stated that the family perspective, which informed the Grid regarding families was *Too traditional* and that *The Grid neglected an individual perspective.* They perceived that the Grid's principles were laden with "conservative," "right wing" values of family. Thus, they believed that the Grid was biased toward certain family forms and excluded other forms. They criticized the Grid for putting the interests of the family over the interests of individuals in the family. In contrast, they explained that in government it is important to think of individuals first and write policies based on individuals. This uncertainty about creating policies using a family perspective is mirrored in the literature. To date, the literature is full of debate about whether to design policies using a family or an individual perspective.

Again, the position inherent in the Grid that policy should focus on the family contradicted the manner in which government, including the current government, has traditionally approached policy-making. Thus, implementation was stalemated because the Grid was designed to guide the assessment and development of family policies: whereas, the participants did not believe family policies could be developed.

Summary: The Importance of Value Systems

When attempting a planned change such as the implementation of the Grid, it is important to understand how the values of those involved in the change can result in support or opposition to the change, especially in the areas of convincing of the need for the change and building commitment. Four points that highlight the importance of value systems to the facilitation of a planned change emerged from this investigation.

First, there was a clash between the values of senior officials in the current government, who supported the idea of familial self-sufficiency with little government involvement with families, and the values embodied by the Grid. Senior officials did not accept the causal theory that government has a role in ensuring that policies encourage healthy family functioning, and thus, they did not accept the purpose for the implementation of the Grid.

Second, the participants stated over and over, in many different ways, that there was no need to change their policy-making for families. It was proposed, however, that individuals in government might not have understood how their departments' policies affected families. They might have been truly unaware and might have lacked the understanding of the ripple affects and the indirect and unintended impacts of policies on families.

Third, the government's commitment to deficit elimination meant that people were committed to this priority and not to the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. The assumptions and values underlying radical deficit elimination were incongruent with the assumptions and values embedded in the Grid. Support for families might have been considered an "extra" or frivolous government activity; whereas, deficit elimination was considered "essential".

Therefore, it is clear that an approach to policy-making for families must involve the examination of values as well as the relationships between departments' policies and families. As well, an approach to family policy-making should not disappear with an organizational change, but should be able to withstand organizational changes such as budget cuts, reductions in staff, and department mergers.

It is also important to understand the Grid as the policy instrument in order to understand why the implementation of the Grid was stalemated. First, it must be remembered exactly what policy frameworks are: They are broad guides to policy-making. As such, their interpretation and use is based on various value systems. On the other hand, they are not instruments to independently achieve large scale organizational change.

Alone, the Grid instrument could not have changed the way the provincial government managed its policy-making for families, especially when the change was contrary to the direction of government. Therefore, the Grid as an instrument was not in itself ineffective, but because change was solely contingent on the implementation of a policy framework, implementation was stifled. Clearly, an approach to policy-making for families that is not entirely dependent on a policy framework is needed.

Second, full implementation of the Grid involved assessing and developing family policies. However, the participants' doubts or disbelief in the possibility of designing family policies created a barrier to implementing the Grid and contributed to its stalemate. Thus, a different way of thinking about policy-making for families, without getting trapped in or confused by the idea or concept of family policy, is also needed.

Communicating and Choosing Incremental Change

The discussion of the previous elements have helped illustrate the nature of the implementation process of the Grid in a government context. The remaining elements, Communicating and Choosing incremental change, also help explain why the implementation of the Grid was stalemated. However, these elements did not emerge in the analysis as particularly significant in explaining this unique implementation process.

Communicating did not emerge as a critical element as there were very few links between the comments about communicating and other comments that would have helped illuminate the process of implementing the Grid and why it was stalemated. Communication may have been taken for granted by participants. The participants might have assumed the need for constant communication during a planned change, and they might have thought that mentioning communication was stating the obvious.

Incremental change may not have emerged as a critical element because it is difficult to articulate the phenomenon. Although research suggests that incremental change is most appropriate in a large, bureaucratic, heterogeneous, and political organization, the participants might have been less attentive to it. Again, they might have assumed that this is how change often does unfold in government. Therefore, not discussing the elements of Communicating and Choosing incremental change does not mean that they were not important to facilitating a planned change in government; instead, it suggests that other elements were much more meaningful in explaining the implementation of the Grid.

Implications

The implications are derived from a response to the question, "What has been learned from this research on the implementation of the Family Policy Grid about government policy-making for families?" It was important to me to go beyond the conclusions of this research and suggest potential strategies that could result in changes to the government family policy-making system. Therefore, these implications are not presumed to be strategies that can transform the entire family policy-making system; rather, they are my thoughts about a structure and process that could bring about a more useful approach to family policy-making in government.

The implications are a response to the power held by senior officials and the clash of value systems. Given the power of senior officials, it would be invaluable to develop an authority structure in government responsible for families. As well, given the possibility of a clash between value systems, it would be beneficial to develop a critical thinking approach to family policy-making.

An Authority Structure

The elements of the conceptual framework including Naming a change agent, Securing leadership, and Planning a change, and the theme, power of senior officials, help to explain the stalemate of the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. The most important implication resulting from this discussion is the necessity of establishing a permanent authority structure that addresses and monitors action on family issues within the provincial government. Recommending a permanent authority structure is not unique. The Quebec government established an authority structure for families in 1987 and the Canada Committee for International Year of the Family (1995) made a similar recommendation to the Federal government. However, the need for a permanent authority structure did emerge directly out of the findings of this research.

First, it is important, according to the culture of government, for any structure (i.e., Agency, Council or Committee) to have a leader and a change agent with access to power. Second, it is important for the structure to be permanent. A transitory structure can be considered nonessential and ignored until it is disbanded. Furthermore, support for families is and will continue to be an on-going issue; it is not something that can be fixed in one to five years, which has been the usual duration of the Agencies, Councils and Committees that have been established for families in the past.

The authority structure should consist of three parts. The first part should include a Cabinet Minister for families who would head this authority structure. This person would be the spokesperson and would take on the leadership role, as described in the conceptual framework, working for families. Appointing a Minister ensures that a power-holding individual is directly responsible for the relationship and initiatives between government and families in the province.

The second part of this authority structure should include a permanent Secretariat for Families. Its role would be to inform the Minister about the needs of families and assess and monitor the impact of policies on families. It would have the final say, in collaboration with the Minister, about government policies that affect families. It would, according to the conceptual framework, be the primary change agent. Departments would report to the Secretariat, which would report to the Minister.

It would also be beneficial to set up an Advisory Council similar to the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families as the third part of the authority structure. The primary role of the Advisory Council would be educational. It would be responsible for researching family issues and educating those internal and external to government on issues affecting families. Community consultations would be a part of this research strategy. Although it would be an arm of government, its role would also include advising government on its proposed policy decisions for families. Thus, it would provide specific recommendations on how government could support Alberta families.

The idea for establishing an authority structure that is responsible for families is the result of the experiences of individuals in the Alberta government. The authority structure would be effective for changing the family policy-making system because it would fit within the culture of government. The Minister, or leader, and Secretariat, or change agent, would have the power to make policy decisions for families that bureaucrats would follow. They could not be ignored nor considered a pet project or transitory group. The Advisory Council would be responsible for researching, educating, and advising, and not for directing a change to the family policy-making system across all of government. Establishing reporting lines among the Minister, the Secretariat, and departments would ensure that departments were accountable for their policy decisions concerning families. In addition, it is important to recognize that all components of the proposed authority structure are necessary for change. Establishing one or two of the components without the other(s) is insufficient to result in change in policy-making for families. As well, the Minister, the

Secretariat, and the Advisory Council would also have to work together as a cohesive structure and pursue the same priorities for a change to be realized.

It was important for the government to establish the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, but there was a missing link that contributed to the stalemate of the implementation of the Grid. A permanent, cohesive authority structure embodying clear and power-holding leadership and change agent roles, such as a Minister and Secretariat responsible for families, was the missing link to bringing about changes to the family policy-making system. Consequently, if a government is serious about changing its family policy-making process, it should establish an authority structure responsible for families.

A Process: Critical Thinking About Family Policy-Making

The conceptual framework elements Convincing of the need for the change and Building commitment as well as the Grid as the policy instrument and the theme lack of congruence between value systems, also help to explain the stalemate of the implementation of the Family Policy Grid. The most important implication resulting from the examination of these elements and this theme is the necessity to establish a method that targets individuals' values and targets basing policy decisions for families on these values.

A method that would target individuals' values is a critical thinking approach. Critical thinking involves analytically reflecting on issues. It includes reflecting on the discrepancies between what is and what should be. It involves new ways of seeing and thinking about ourselves in the world and what is important for the good of all citizens (Vaines, 1988). Critical thinking is the basis for transformation or change. Transformation involves addressing political systems, such as a provincial government, with the intent to change how we live (Vaines, 1988).

Critically thinking about policy-making for families would include peeling back the layers of the decisions made in the past for families to discover the assumptions and values on which these decisions were based. It would also involve an examination of the discrepancies between family policies and which families these policies benefit. It would also include an exploration of the beliefs from society on which many of our family policies are based. However, this is a long and involved process that needs to be developed over time. At this point, only the first steps to critical thinking approach in government are suggested. They are targeted at beginning to modify the manner in which all individuals in government including middle managers, as well as the proposed authority structure and front-line workers think about and act on policy decisions for families.

These first steps include questions that challenge individuals in government to reflect on the role of government in family life. These questions involve reflecting on what needs to be changed for families and why. More specifically, critically thinking about the basic role of government includes individuals' perceptions of what is a "basic public service." What is it that government should be doing for its citizens? What should the role or function of government be in relation to families? What are the basic public services government should provide to families? Therefore, individuals in government must decide the degree to which they believe the provincial government should take a role in helping families manage such things as illness, unemployment, disability, old age, and hardship.

These questions target individuals' values about government involvement in family life. By responding to these questions, individuals in government would become more aware of what they believe government should be doing for families. Furthermore, they would also be more aware of contradictions in values between what government is doing and what they believe government should be doing for families. Ideally, values and actions should match. However, due to the culture of government, middle managers and front-line workers may not be able to act according to their values regarding the government's role with and responsibilities to families. However, if the recommended authority structure was established, a formal, power-holding structure would embody the responses to these questions and could base policy decisions for families on these responses.

After reflecting on the basic role of government in family life, individuals in government are challenged to think critically about issues that affect families. This shifts the focus from making families a priority, as did the Grid, to making issues that affect families the priorities. For example, issues that affect families are crime, poverty, taxation, and wife assault. More specifically, in the department of Municipal Affairs, an issue might be home ownership; in Education, it might be business involvement in curriculum development; in Justice, it might be impaired driving; and in Transportation it might be public safety.

Many issues are close to the hearts of people and their affects on all types of families are undeniable. Thus, individuals are more able to identify with issues and how issues affect families than with a document or instrument. Identifying with these issues might foster thinking about what is and what should be. Thinking critically about issues can enlighten individuals and help them develop opinions about actions that need to be taken and government policies that need to be established to affect these issues. As a result, the issues affecting families might more likely receive attention on the government's agenda.

In addition, this critical approach should be applied by people in the community. By addressing the questions about the role of government in family life and thinking critically about the issues, people would be able to identify for themselves their beliefs about the government's responsibilities to families, which would enable them to better direct and monitor government policy decisions for families. Although the community was not formally introduced in the discussion, all government decisions should be made with strong input from the community through advocacy, lobbying, community groups, and voting in elections. Government policy decisions for families need to reflect the values important to the community. Thus, thinking critically about policy-making for families does not rely on an instrument; instead, it relies on the views of individuals, both in government and in the community, about the type of society in which they want to live.

More specifically, a critical thinking approach could be integrated into the original conceptual framework which would enhance or make more effective the seven elements discussed as necessary for facilitating a planned change in government. A change agent, as well as a leader, would need to be able to demonstrate and apply critical thinking to family policy-making. In addition, a leader would have to endorse this type of thinking and approach to family policy-making. In planning a change, it would be important to plan activities that would encourage and guide individuals through critical thinking processes about families and government change for families. In turn, inviting individuals to participate in these activities would involve them on a critical analytical level which would provide a holistic approach to understanding and building commitment to a planned change. In addition, to convince individuals of the need for or rationale behind a change, specific opportunities to examine assumptions about government involvement in family life would need to be included. Applying a critical approach to communicating would include, for example, exploring values related to government support for families, examining the use of policy-making language and communicating about the planned change with individuals who have and do not have power. Finally, a critical thinking approach to family policy-making, as discussed, is not a quick and easy step-by-step process, but a very involved, iterative, and complex process. It takes time to unearth assumptions, examine values and the many different angles influencing family policy-making. An incremental approach to change can accommodate critical thinking about family policy-making. Thus, a critical thinking approach can be interwoven throughout all the conceptual framework elements necessary for facilitating a planned change in government.

In summary, an instrument such as the Grid may be useful as an aid to change, but it cannot be the main thrust behind a change. As a result, I am arguing that individuals at all levels of government as well as members of the community become more conversant and well-grounded in their values about governments' role in family life, the issues that affect families, and the policy decisions that will affect these issues. Therefore, individuals in the government should define for themselves what they believe constitutes the basic role and responsibilities of government in family life. Furthermore, individuals in government should approach policy-making for families by critically thinking about the issues affecting families and the policies that would affect these issues. They must also consider the role the community has to play in policy-making for families. Finally, a critical thinking approach is not an esoteric, selective process but an approach that can be interwoven throughout activities, such as it was in the conceptual framework, to enhance the facilitation of a planned change. Although a critical thinking approach cannot guarantee the result of supportive policies for families, it challenges individuals to grapple with questions that may stimulate changes in policy-making for families.

Overall, an authority structure in government for families and a critical thinking approach will not transform the entire family policy-making system. However, this structure and a critical thinking process may be useful for policy-making for families. These implications capture my thoughts about what might forward government policy-making for families.

A Final Reflection

> "And what is more important than knowledge?", asked the mind. "Caring and seeing with the heart", answered the soul.
>
> *Flore*

Through the past five years my mind, my heart, and my soul were absorbed in researching and writing this dissertation. Throughout the entire process, I gained knowledge about methodology and in the content areas of family policy and provincial government. More importantly, I learned about "caring and seeing with the heart". I realized that knowledge is important but caring and seeing with the heart completes the research process. It helped me to hear participants and appreciate their experiences. It enabled me to analyze the raw data in a more purposeful manner and look beyond it to see the real challenges in family policy-making in government.

I am completing this particular study with the understanding that caring and seeing with the heart should not be removed from the research process. It makes the process a valuable, worthwhile, and meaningful endeavor. As a result of this experience, I am more committed to researching family policy with the desire to bring real changes to improve the quality of life for families.

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APPENDIX A

THE ALBERTA FAMILY POLICY GRID

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December 6, 1995

Maria Mayan
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Dear Ms. Mayan,

The Department of Family and Social Services wishes to congratulate you on your Ph.D. candidacy in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta.

We appreciate your interest in the Family Policy Grid document and confirm permission on its use on your dissertation.

If you need additional copies of the Family Policy Grid, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 427-4801.

Sincerely,

Joyce De Pano-Yap
Assistant to Director of Communications

Printed on Recycled Paper

Family Policy Grid

THE PREMIER'S COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF
ALBERTA FAMILIES

Executive Summary

The family is the single greatest influence on our lives, shaping who we are, how we feel about ourselves and how we approach the challenges of life. Government policies, programs and laws play an important part in the lives of individuals and families. Policies must be assessed to ensure that they encourage healthy family functioning and strengthen the capacity of families to meet the needs of their members.

The Family Policy Grid has been developed to:

1. heighten awareness of how government affects families
2. facilitate review of existing and proposed policies and programs to ensure they have no unintended consequences for families
3. address the consequences of policies for families
4. facilitate agreement on objectives of policies and programs for families
5. facilitate a coherent policy approach to families across government
6. increase sensitivity at all levels of government on the importance of supporting and strengthening families in all actions taken by government

The Family Policy Grid provides a framework for departments to use in developing and assessing policies affecting families. It was designed for use by provincial departments of government as a tool to assist them in reviewing legislation, policies, programs and administrative procedures of government for their anticipated effects on families.

The Grid includes a statement of eight principles to guide policy and program development designed to support Alberta families. These family policy principles focus on family well being, family roles, family diversity, family support, family commitment and responsibility, family interests and partnerships with families and others involved in meeting family needs. The principles must be taken together as each is an interrelated part of the overall family policy perspective. A rationale for each principle supports and upholds the merit of the principle. Questions for assessing the impact on families are also included. While there are many questions which are included in the Grid, the significant question to be asked is **"will this policy, law or program be fair, supportive and encouraging toward Alberta families?"**

Initially the strategy is to focus on major areas of government activity with respect to their impact on families. Ultimately, the intent is to bring all policies and programs in line with the principles.

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families has been assisted by departments in the development of the Family Policy Grid. The Council has also benefited from the review and input provided by an advisory group of academics.

Through its approval Cabinet has declared its support for the Family Policy Grid as the government's statement of principles for strengthening and supporting families. Departments are required to identify the extent to which their programs reflect the principles of the Family Policy Grid, areas for review or change, and any relevant initiatives which are planned or underway.

Further, any relevant policy, legislation or program submitted for Cabinet approval will include an assessment of the impact on families. The role of the Premier's Council is to coordinate the preparation and annual update of a government wide Action Plan in Support of Alberta Families.

Departments that are undertaking a review and evaluation of the effectiveness of government delivered and funded programs which have an impact on families are asked to incorporate questions addressed in the Grid as part of their review. Also, in their staff development plans the need to increase sensitivity of staff to enhancing family well being must be addressed.

The Family Policy Grid will also be made available to local government agencies and community organizations for their information, adaption or use.

Foreword

I take great pleasure in introducing the Family Policy Grid which was approved by Cabinet on December 4, 1991. With approval of the Grid, our government has given its commitment to enhancing family well-being through sensitive and supportive public policies.

The Family Policy Grid was developed as a tool to assist government departments in their ongoing assessment of the impact of current and proposed legislation, policies, programs and administrative procedures on Alberta Families. I have been encouraged by the enthusiasm and involvement of those who worked with the Premier's Council in the development of this document. As a Council, we are dedicated to continuing to work in close collaboration with all government departments in our efforts to respond with sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of Alberta families. This includes our continuing efforts to work toward a more coordinated approach to policies and programs across government in meeting family needs.

Reflecting public perspectives in this process is absolutely essential. The Council is committed to continuing its dialogue with the public and bringing issues, concerns and recommendations of Albertans forward for attention.

The Grid does not provide us with answers. But, through application of the Grid, important questions are raised for consideration and discussion and a process initiated to focus attention on family well-being.

It was less than two years ago that the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference — Celebrating Alberta's Families, proposed the development of a Grid. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of many who had a role the development of the Family Policy Grid, it is now available for your use. The Premier's Council encourages its use, not only by government departments, but by any organization which develops policies and programs that serve and support families.

With your help and involvement, together we can build a future where families can thrive.

Stockwell Day

Stockwell Day, M.L.A.
Chairman
Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

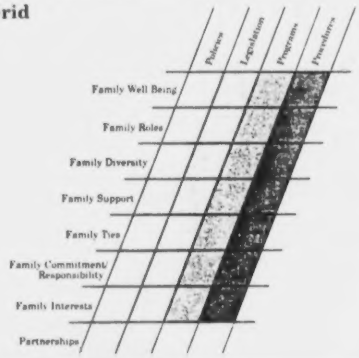
Introduction

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families was established in March 1990 as part of several government initiatives to support Alberta families, to ensure that families remain strong and that those in crisis receive the support of a caring society. The role of the Council is to advise the government on how its policies, programs and services may affect family life in Alberta and to ensure that attention is given to the needs of families in all public policies. One of its first tasks has been the development of a Family Policy Grid which is outlined in this document. The Family Policy Grid is a statement of principles against which to assess policies, programs, legislation, and administrative procedures. It has been developed to assist those who are involved in developing laws, policies and programs, or measuring their outcomes, to become more sensitive to their impact on family well being.

The Family Policy Grid has been developed in response to a recommendation put forward at the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference — Celebrating Alberta's Families held in February 1990. This conference provided a beginning to a process of obtaining a broad range of opinions and input from across the province on issues of concern to families. The conference provided the start to discussions with all Albertans about solutions to the complex issues facing Alberta families today and into the future.

The Council has been assisted by the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy in the development of the Family Policy Grid (see Appendix A for Terms of Reference). The Council has also benefited from the review and input provided by an advisory group of academics (see Appendix B).

Family Policy Grid



Purpose

The Family Policy Grid has been developed to:

1. ***heighten awareness of ways in which government affects families***
2. ***facilitate review of existing and proposed policies and programs in order to ensure that they do not have unintended consequences for families***
3. ***address the consequences of policies for families***
4. ***facilitate agreement on the objectives of policies and programs for families***
5. ***facilitate a coherent policy approach to families across government***
6. ***increase sensitivity at all levels of government on the importance of supporting and strengthening families in all actions taken by government.***

The focus of activity will be initially on addressing the major areas of government activity with respect to their impact on families. Ultimately, the intent is to bring all relevant policies and programs of government in line with the principles and values reflected in the Family Policy Grid.* It is recognized, however, that the process of initiating change takes time. It must respect resource realities, the difficulties of achieving unanimity in addressing value conflicts as well as the time required to develop the desired awareness and sensitivity needed for implementation of the Grid.

> ***Nothing we do as a government is more important than nourishing and supporting Alberta's families in all their diverse forms.***
>
> ***Policies must be assessed in order to ensure that they encourage the healthy functioning of families and strengthen the capacity of families to meet the needs of their members.***
>
> *Premier Don Getty*

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* Wherever policies and programs are referenced in the document, it is intended that legislation and administrative procedures be included.

Why a Focus on Families

The well being of society is promoted by the well being of individuals within families. The family is the single greatest influence on our lives, shaping who we are, how we feel about ourselves and how we approach the challenges of life. It is essential for the transmission of social, cultural and moral values. Families form our foundation and provide our stability as a province. Although undergoing considerable transformation, the family is unparalleled in its efficiency and success in meeting the needs of its members. No institution can successfully replace the family. However, our family and social lives are very different from what they were in previous generations. There is general agreement that the times are economically, socially and morally harder on families and particularly on children growing up today. Families have changed in response to changes in the society and its institutions. The ability of families to adapt to the many changes going on around them, however, attests to their resilience.

Government programs, policies, and laws play an important part in the lives of individuals and families. Policies must be assessed in order to ensure that they encourage healthy family functioning and strengthen the capacity of families to meet the needs of their members. This will assist in supporting families to effectively fulfil their role in the society. The vitality of the province depends on the contributions made by families. For this reason it is important to have policies which support and strengthen families.

The decisions and choices of family members have public consequences in the same way that public policy choices and decisions have consequences for families and their members. Respecting and maintaining this delicate balance of the private and public domains of family life is a challenge for public policy. The focus of these efforts is intended to ensure that public policy supports family life and family well being without encroaching on family privacy and without diminishing the responsibilities of families.

Family life remains an appropriate area for concern for government, if only because virtually all government action affects families — directly or indirectly.

S. Kamerman & A. Kahn
Social Policy Researchers
Columbia University

What is Family Policy

Overall, policies reflect the choices that are made in relation to societal values and the determination of an agreed upon course of action. Policies are set at all levels of government including federal, provincial and municipal. Clearly no modern industrial society can avoid policies that affect the family. The real choice is between a deliberate, coherent family policy and one of inconsistency and mischance. All policy affects families directly or indirectly in both positive and negative ways. Consequences of these policies can be intended or unintended. If all aspects of government that affect families are included, then family policy encompasses most government actions. In the context of this document, family policy is defined as "what government does to and for families in particular those public policies that are explicitly designed to affect the situation of families with children . . . individuals in their family roles . . . and those that have clear consequences for families even though impacts may not have been intended." (Kamerman & Kahn, 1989)

The government has a myriad of policies and programs which have consequences for families. They have been put in place at different points in our history with varying goals and orientations. The focus of public policies to date has been primarily in the context of helping individuals. Even social policies for individuals (i.e., seniors, youth, children, adults) have not always been designed in terms of the family unit. Family considerations are not generally addressed in the normal process of policy making. The introduction of a family perspective and family well being as a standard by which to assess social policies broadens the scope of social policy concerns.

While the focus of family policy can be broad or narrow, the primary value that ranks first among other values is family well being. Analyzing the impact of policies on family well being requires attention to both implicit and explicit policies. Explicit family policies are those in which the goals or objectives for families are deliberately structured. Examples of such programs are adoptions, family violence, child protection services, child care etc. Implicit family policies are those that affect families although objectives for families are not deliberately structured into them. Examples include sports programs, parks design and curriculum development where the specific goals of the program may not identify objectives for families but nevertheless have impact on them. Implicit family policies are more difficult to understand as their effects on families are not as directed. While these policies have consequences for families, the effects may not have been intended.

Family policy is defined as what government does to and for families in particular those public policies that are explicitly designed to affect the situation of families with children . . . individuals in their family role . . . and those that have clear consequences for families even though impacts may not have been intended.

S. Kamerman & A. Kahn
Social Policy Researchers
Columbia University

What is Family

In any discussion of family, the question of definition arises. It is not an easy question to address and is the subject of considerable debate and discussion. It has been further complicated by realities of separation, divorce, remarriage and surrogate parenthood. There are those who define families according to structure, i.e., who is defined as part of a family or not part of a family. How rigid or fluid the boundaries are reflects who is in and who is out. There are others who look at families in terms of what they do for their members and their contribution to society rather than in terms of composition. Because of the variety of family structures that exist in our pluralistic society and the challenge that this creates for defining families in a meaningful way in terms of structure, families are defined here according to their functions.

The following functions are generally viewed as those that families are expected to perform:

- care and maintenance of family members
- addition of new members, through procreation and adoption, and relinquishment at maturity
- socialization of children for adult roles (i.e., spouse, parent, worker, neighbour, voter, community member)
- social control of members
- production and consumption of goods and services needed to support and maintain the family
- promotion and maintenance of family morale, motivation, and healthy lifestyles

Not all functions are undertaken by all families, however, the continuance and well being of our society and all its institutions depends on these contributions being effectively managed by families.

What is increasingly recognized in any discussion of the definition of family is the diversity of family types and values. Families come with different traditions, cultures, socio-economic status, from different regions of the province, with differing priorities and perspectives. Also, families are not static throughout their life cycle. As a result, needs vary among families and within a family over time. This creates complexities and conflicts which must be reconciled and reviewed on a regular basis to effectively respond to changing family needs.

> ***Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulty of coming up with a good cut-and -dried definition of the family, if we ask ourselves, or anybody else, who is their family, most people will be able to give a clear and unambiguous answer. For instance, they may say "my family consists of my spouse, my children, my parents and Aunt Sally." However, they may not list Uncle Herbert, because there is very little interaction with him.***
>
> *Margrit Eichler*
> *Sociologist*
> *Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

What is the Family Policy Grid

The Family Policy Grid provides a framework for departments to use in developing and assessing policies affecting families. The Grid includes a statement of eight principles (see pages 16 to 25) to guide policy and program development designed to support Alberta families. The rationale provided for each principle supports and upholds the merit of the principle. Questions are included under "areas for consideration" to assist in making an assessment of the impact of the policy or program being reviewed, on families. It is essential when reading or applying the Family Policy Grid that the principles are taken together as each is an interrelated part of the overall family policy perspective.

As previously indicated, all policy affects families, directly or indirectly, in both positive and negative ways. In order to protect families from unintended consequences of policies as well as to shape and develop policies that support family well being, we need to understand policies in terms of their impact on families. A good understanding of families is also needed so that both what is done by government, and how it is done, can be influenced by the realities of family life.

The Family Policy Grid is not a remedy in itself, but a standard by which laws, policies, programs and administrative procedures can be assessed. The Family Policy Grid was designed for use by provincial departments of government to assist them in reviewing legislation, policies and programs of government for their anticipated effects on families. The Grid may also assist municipalities, school boards, agencies and organizations to assess their policies, programs and administrative practices to determine if they are sensitive to and supportive of families. The intent is to generate discussion and review with the central tenet of all actions for families being "first of all, do no harm." While there are many questions which are included in the Grid, the significant question to be asked is "will this policy, law or program be fair, supportive and encouraging toward Alberta families?."

Through the Family Policy Grid, the government is declaring its intent to promote the stability of Alberta families, and to consider families in everything that is done by government.

It is essential when reading or applying the Family Policy Grid that the principles are taken together as each is an interrelated part of the overall family perspective.

The intent is to generate discussion and review with the central tenet of all actions for families being "first of all, do no harm."

Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

How Will The Grid Be Applied

The Challenges

The Grid makes the value positions of the government more explicit, but it does not make the task of choosing between alternative strategies and outcomes any easier. Any analysis of legislation, policies and programs with regard to their impacts on families requires application of value judgements and personal assessments.

The purpose is to foster discussion and assessment of the impact of current and proposed approaches to policies and programs. The challenge is to find agreement on the most effective strategies recognizing that consensus on objectives is not always possible. Ambiguity and conflict can emerge when there are diverse values and perspectives. However, the potential difficulties of applying the Grid to the decision making process in departments does not negate the value of doing so. Explicitly detailing the underlying assumptions on which policies are based, with a renewed sensitivity to family issues, will increase the likelihood of changes which benefit family well being.

Applications

1. **Review of Existing Policies, Legislation and Programs**

The role of departments is to review policies and programs to determine to what extent they reflect the principles in the Family Policy Grid. The Premier's Council is interested in determining where there is consistency with the principles and where additional review or changes are required. Also, identification of changes that are planned or underway to bring policies and programs more in line with the principles should be included as well as the implications of those changes. Strategies and recommendations may involve changes and/or initiatives in such areas as:

- administrative procedures
- legislation, regulations
- funding allocations
- eligibility criteria
- staffing and training
- client accessibility
- mechanisms for family involvement
- coordination with other programs
- pilot programs or projects
- education and awareness enhancement
- research initiatives
- program evaluations

Departments are asked to ensure that consequences for families are considered in current policies and programs. Departments are respon-

> ***I insist on the expression "think family" because it points to the engine of government activity seeking to adapt its policies to family reality.***
>
> *Maurice Champagne*
> *Former Special Advisor to the Quebec Minister of Family Policy*

sible for the identification of issues and accountable for the implementation of approved changes with the role of the Premier's Council being one of reviewing the government wide action plan and reporting on progress to Cabinet. The initial assessment undertaken by departments will lead to a government wide action plan. The action plan is intended to address major areas of priority for change. Ultimately, the Family Policy Grid will be applied to all policies and programs in more depth using the specific questions which follow each principle as a way to review the changes that must be made to improve overall effectiveness for families. Using existing departmental evaluation processes, any policy or program can be assessed in terms of its impact on families by addressing the questions proposed in the Family Policy Grid. The questions included in the "areas for consideration" are intended to stimulate thinking but are not program specific or all inclusive. In any review undertaken, additional questions may need to be considered within the context of the specific program.

2. **Assessment of Proposed Policies, Legislation and Programs**
   Any proposed policy, legislation or program submitted for Cabinet approval should be assessed using the Family Policy Grid. This would include an assessment of the impact on families of implementing the proposed policy, legislation or program. Cabinet decision would be influenced in part by this assessment.

3. **Ongoing Operations**
   A focus on overall family well being is critical in terms of the actions of staff at all levels of the department. As such the Family Policy Grid should form part of the values of departmental operations and become a fundamental part of staff behaviours at all levels. This can be achieved through communication of the principles to all staff and integration of this information in educational and awareness sessions.

   The Grid can also be used by government departments to help incorporate a family focus in evaluations that are undertaken of the effectiveness of government funded programs.

4. **Local Government Agencies, Organizations**
   The Family Policy Grid serves as a guide, not a blueprint, which can be adapted to a variety of contexts to assess the effects of existing or pro-

Albertans have the spirit and strength to affect positive change — the fact that government set up the Council indicates its potential willingness and commitment to lead and participate in positive change for families.

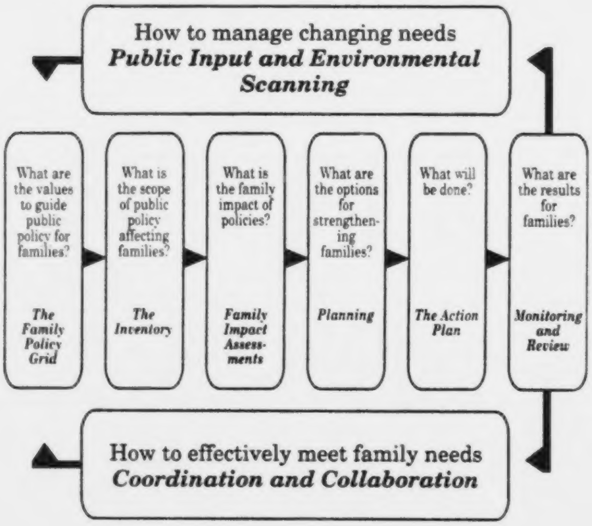
Stockwell Day, M.L.A.
Chairman, Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

posed policies or programs. The questions put forward in "areas for consideration" can be used by local governments to review their policies, determine if existing programs should continue to be supported, critique proposed policies, guide studies of the impact of programs or develop a policy response to an issue or need.

An agency or organization may use the Grid as a guide to undertake a self assessment of programs offered, in assessing its response to community issues or needs or in incorporating a family focus into its policies (e.g., school board policies).

Use of the Grid in all of these ways should lead to an improved understanding of how to design and implement programs that are supportive of family life.

Family Policy Process


How to manage changing needs
Public Input and Environmental Scanning
What are the values to guide public policy for families?
The Family Policy Grid
What is the scope of public policy affecting families?
The Inventory
What is the family impact of policies?
Family Impact Assessments
What are the options for strengthening families?
Planning
What will be done?
The Action Plan
What are the results for families?
Monitoring and Review
How to effectively meet family needs
Coordination and Collaboration

> ***I believe in Alberta's families. I believe that their strength and vitality is a measure of an ability to succeed in the future, and I believe that together we can effectively help our families meet any challenges in the future.***
>
> *The Honourable*
> *W. Helen Hunley*

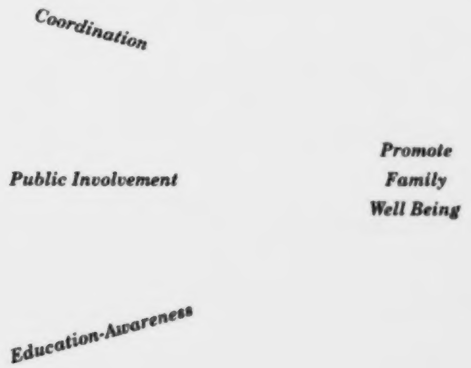
The Role of the Premier's Council

Coordination

The role of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families is to act in an advisory capacity with respect to policies, programs and services which may impact on family life in Alberta. The Council works with all departments of government to facilitate review of policies and programs in light of their impact on families and to coordinate a plan of action on required changes in legislation, policies and programs.

The importance of the coordinating role cannot be underestimated, both in terms of the need to integrate services for families and coordinating policies, legislation and programs affecting families in order to facilitate consistency and congruence of family policies across government departments.

Over the past several years a wide variety of programs and services have been developed to support and assist families. This has led to specialization which can, at times, result in fragmentation of service delivery and creation of separate program eligibility criteria and funding streams for services that may not always be integrated one with another. Families do not necessarily fit into specific service categories. Their needs are interdependent. Failure to meet needs of families in one area often exacerbates their requirements in another. The need for interdependent solutions to family concerns are coming into much greater public focus. A major challenge for the Premier's Council is to facilitate a change process working together with Deputy Ministers across all government departments and



the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy while maintaining departmental accountability and authority for implementing changes.

Public Involvement

The Premier's Council also has an important role in facilitating public debate and discussion of issues. In the fall of 1988, the Alberta Government adopted a statement of social policy for Alberta entitled "Caring and Responsibility." As one of its principles, the document states that "Government policies and programs should involve, to the extent possible, communities and community agencies in the development, delivery and evaluation of services to families."

The challenge for the Council is to facilitate public input by identifying issues of concern to families, reconciling competing perspectives, informing the public and facilitating change, where required, based on this input. Where changes are indicated in government policy, the Council will work with departments to address public concerns. However, the government must not take sole responsibility for action on all issues. Responsibility for making required changes to support family well being must be a cooperative venture with families, communities, businesses, organizations and agencies. As such, the role of the Council is enhanced by working in partnership with others in addressing priority areas that are amenable to change.

> ***Albertans have values that are important to them and their families — we need to do all we can to make sure that government programs and actions reflect that reality.***
>
> *Stockwell Day, M.L.A.*
> *Chairman, Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families*

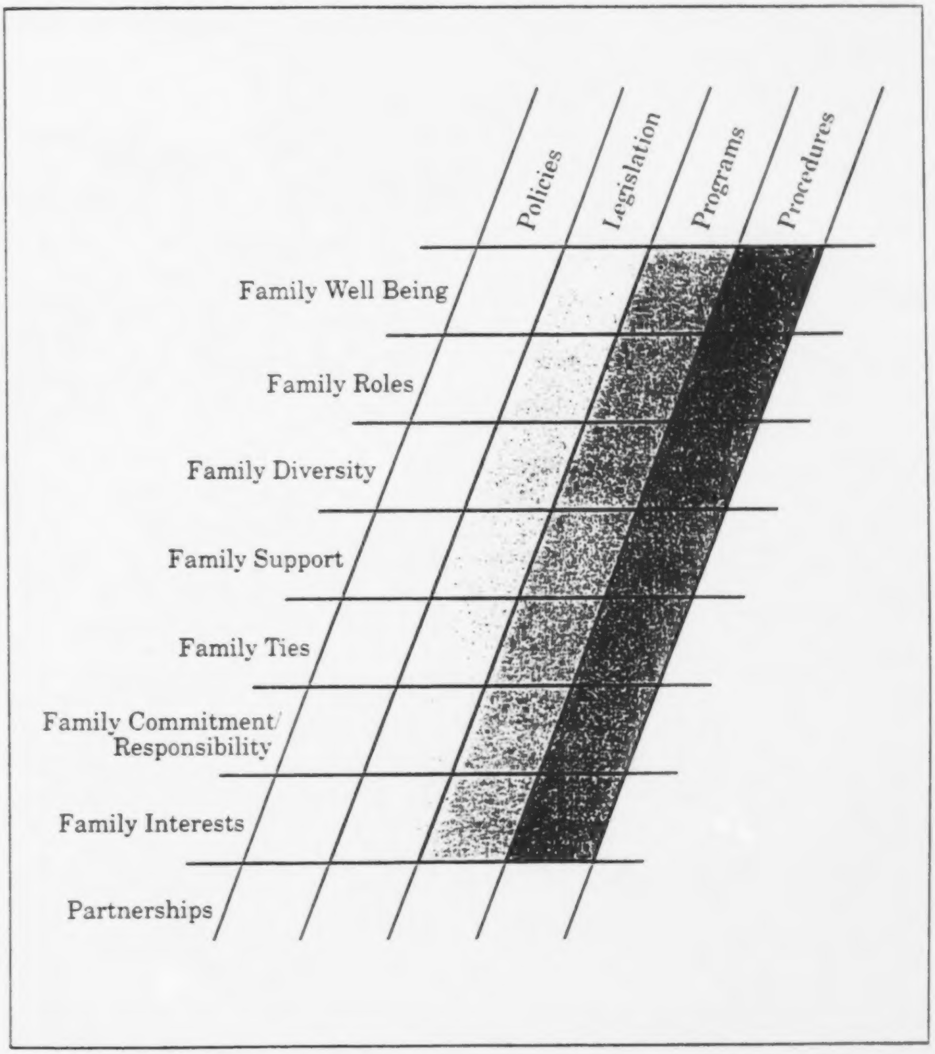
Change depends on expansion of vision, on new ways of understanding an issue. Policies of themselves, do not produce change. Public debate and discussion of issues is an essential prerequisite.

Education/Awareness

In addition to its role in facilitating public input, the Council serves as a source of information for all government departments on family initiatives elsewhere, as well as research and demographic data about changing family realities. This information is available to government departments as a basis for planning and policy development. The Council is also compiling data about government programs related to family integrity and functioning, to assist in the identification and analysis of government programs which address and support family functions.

The Council provides orientation sessions and consultation to government departments to assist them with the application of the Grid.

The Family Policy Grid


Policies
Legislation
Programs
Procedures
Family Well Being
Family Roles
Family Diversity
Family Support
Family Ties
Family Commitment/
Responsibility
Family Interests
Partnerships

15 Family Policy Grid — *The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families*

Principle 1

Government policies and programs recognize and support families as fundamental to the strength and stability of society.

Rationale

- The well being of society is promoted by the well being of families. The well being of the family unit, in turn, depends on the effective functioning of individual family members.
- Families have an important role in the society in:
  - caring for and about each other
  - having and rearing children to create a new generation
  - passing on social, cultural and spiritual values and traditions
  - teaching life skills
  - providing advice and guidance
  - promoting a healthy lifestyle
  - setting and enforcing rules, norms and appropriate behaviour for each other
  - providing food, shelter, clothing and other necessities through income and employment
  - encouraging personal confidence and motivation
- There is no effective substitute for the role that families have in nurturing, loving and caring for each other.
- Families do not exist in isolation. The values, decisions and behaviours of family members both reflect and influence the larger social system to which they belong.
- Family life is strengthened when the conditions in which families can thrive are attended to through supportive public policies in areas such as child care, health care, education, income support, environment, housing etc.
- It is in the best interests of society that public policies recognize the fundamental role of families in the strength and overall stability of society.

. . . as we prepare for the 21st century, I believe that the key to strengthening the social and economic fabric of Alberta lies in ensuring that the family, in all its diversity, remains a central and enduring force.

Premier Don Getty

Areas for Consideration

- How does the policy or program support the autonomy and vitality of families?
- How is recognition and support for families demonstrated by the policy or program?
- What efforts are made on behalf of families to support continuity and viability of the family unit?
- To what extent and under what conditions does the policy or program encroach on family privacy?
- What attention, if any, is given to the broad societal context and its impact on families?

Principle 2

Government policies and programs support and supplement the ability of families to fulfil their essential roles and responsibilities

Rationale

- Recognizing that families rely on a supportive environment to thrive, policies and programs should reinforce and support the desire for self sufficiency and independence by families.
- A primary objective of policies and programs designed for families should be to support and strengthen families' own ability to manage.
- Any support and assistance that is provided by government to families should not substitute or undermine the capacity of individuals in families to support each other and to make decisions on their own behalf. Interventions that substitute for families should only be made where it is clear that the family will not be able to function sufficiently even with support, in situations of serious risk of harm or at the request of the family.
- Government policies should enable families and members of families to fulfil their roles and responsibilities with consideration given to the differences in their needs and the personal supports available to them.

No other agency on the planet can teach human beings to be intelligent, honest, generous and moral as efficiently as the family.

Roy Bonisteel
Canadian Broadcaster and Author

Areas for Consideration

- In what ways does the policy or program meet the needs of families without diminishing their self sufficiency and independence or inappropriately substituting for their role?
- How does the policy enable families to maintain or enhance self sufficiency and independence?
- In what ways does the policy or program inform families so that they can expand their choices and options in order to make appropriate decisions on their own behalf?
- Whenever it is necessary to impinge on family autonomy, what principles guide program staff to make decisions on behalf of families?
- In what ways does the policy or program demonstrate respect and dignity for the strengths and capabilities of family members even where there are difficulties?
- How does the policy or program enhance parental competence? Are there any aspects of the policy or program which diminish the parental role?

Principle 3

Government policies and programs demonstrate respect for and understanding of the diversity of family life and family needs.

Rationale

- Families vary greatly in their structure, some have children, some do not, some have husbands and wives, others do not. Variations also exist in whether all members of the family live together or separately, who is responsible for economic support and the extent of participation in parenting.
- Policies must take into consideration different types of family structure, differences in the life cycle stages, different ethnic, cultural, racial and religious backgrounds, socio-economic differences and differing community contexts.
- Families vary in their experiences with each other ranging from emotionally satisfying to abusive. Policies must take into consideration the consequences of these differences in family interactions.
- Policies must be examined to ensure that they are based on assumptions that reflect current realities. Acceptance of the reality of family change will enable us to examine the consequences of this change and take into account changing family practices.
- Programs and policies must take into account the different effects they have on different types of families. A policy or program which is beneficial for one type of family may have a negative impact on another.

> ***. . . if any single word could be said to characterize families in Canada today, that word would be DIVERSITY.***
>
> *Susan McDaniel*
> *Sociologist*
> *University of Alberta*

Areas for Consideration

- To what extent do the underlying assumptions about families on which this policy or program is based, appropriately reflect an understanding of the diversity (ie. structure, life cycle, values, roles and traditions) of family life and family needs?
- How does the program effectively build on the strengths of ethnic and cultural values and traditions? Are programs and services which are offered, culturally sensitive?
- How does the policy or program address the need to prevent families and family members from being devalued and stigmatized?
- What efforts are made to support families who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, or at risk?

Principle 4

Government policies and programs seek to support and strengthen families and to decrease the potential for family crisis.

Rationale

- Government has a role in promoting awareness, knowledge and skills in assisting families to meet their requirements, cope with ongoing changes, manage events in their lives, strengthen relationships with each other, and make healthy lifestyle choices.
- An investment in preventive strategies aimed at reaching families at high risk can increase the capacity of family members to manage their lives and decrease the probability of problems from occurring.
- Investing in supportive, developmental, educational and preventive services for families can reduce costly protective, remedial and treatment service requirements.
- Programs and policies for families in crisis should help prevent a worsening situation and help lessen the negative effects of a crisis on family members.
- Economic and fiscal policies of government have a significant impact on family well being.

Areas for Consideration

- What efforts are made and resources designated to prevent family problems from occurring or increasing in magnitude?
- What kind of investment is made in the provision of supportive, developmental, educational and preventive services for families in order to strengthen their own ability and capacity to manage effectively?
- What kind of commitment is made to identifying underlying factors that contribute to family distress?

Caring for your young, or your old or each other is legitimate and important work. The skills we learn in caring for each other are important in prevention of problems for families, for individuals and for society.

Susan McDaniel
Sociologist
University of Alberta

Principle 5

Government policies and programs recognize the strength and persistence of family ties.

Rationale

- Family ties are very persistent even when there are difficulties as a result of separation of family members from each other created by events such as divorce, adoption, or intervention by Child Protective Services. Policies should not inhibit the relationships that are desirable and in the best interests of individuals in these families.
- When any one person in a family is receiving a service, there is usually an effect on the entire family. It is important, therefore, to consider the overall impact of that service on the family when dealing with any member in it.
- The ongoing support and involvement which kin networks can provide are important in contributing to stability and continuity for family members.

Areas for Consideration

- How are the changing situations and relationships in families addressed so that consideration is given to the importance of family ties?
- How do policies and programs facilitate or enhance continuity in family relationships?
- What efforts are made to help family members stay connected? Are there circumstances where this is not desirable? What criteria are used to make these decisions?
- How does the program address and balance individual needs, the needs of the individual in relation to his or her family and the needs of the family as a whole?
- How does the policy or program address the impact of services provided to a family member on the other family members?

> ***Families depend upon stability because first and foremost children are conservative . . . they rely on the stable arrangements in their lives to allow them to flourish.***
>
> *James Garbarino*
> *President, Erikson Institute for Advanced Study Child Development*

Principle 6

Government policies and programs recognize and support the commitment and responsibility which family members have for one another.

Rationale

- Families have a powerful influence on their members in determining their life choices and opportunities.
- Policies and programs must support and strengthen the ability of families to manage and fulfil their own functions including caring for and supporting their own family members.
- Families need to be empowered by providing them with information, choice and involvement in decision making to facilitate their commitment and responsibility.
- Parents are legally responsible for the maintenance of their children. Intervention by government to enforce payment obligations ensures income to those rearing children of divorced or separated parents. This also includes support obligations to spouses in the event of divorce or separation.
- The importance of kin networks and the support they can provide needs to be considered as part of the family system. The availability of family members and the concern of extended kin are crucial to children as well as to the life course of elderly people.
- Policies must be examined to ensure that they do not inadvertently undermine family commitment and support by providing incentives for living separately rather than together.

A loving family creates a sense of belonging, of being part of the past, of living and growing in the present and of the expectation of greater things to come. The loving family assures us that we can count on a high degree of true affection, which in turn, enables us to love ourselves and give love to others.

Geneva Johnson
President and CEO
Family Services America

Areas for Consideration

- How does the policy or program consider the kin network as part of the support system that may be available to the family?
- In what ways is the policy or program sensitive to the needs of family members who are caring for those with special needs?
- How do policies and programs recognize the financial responsibilities of family members to each other and for their dependents? Are there disincentives for families to undertake their responsibilities for dependents?
- Is there any way in which the program strengthens or weakens the commitment and responsibility of family members to each other?
- How does the policy or program encourage the mutual support that individuals in families can give one another?
- Does the policy or program work to enhance self help initiatives and supportive networks (i.e., churches, neighbourhoods, volunteers, friends, community agencies) to enhance family commitment and responsibility?
- Does the policy or program ease or impede the decisions of families to marry, divorce, separate, adopt, give birth, etc.?

Principle 7

Government policies and programs respect that family members have legitimate interests in the decisions which are made on their behalf.

Rationale

- Family members have legitimate interests in each other which are based on emotional, biological and legal bonds. These interests must be considered in decisions which are made with and on behalf of families.
- The ability of family members to help identify and provide solutions and alternatives which are appropriate for them must be nurtured and supported.
- Policies and programs must consider the importance of the involvement of family members in decisions which affect them.

Areas for Consideration

- How are the needs and legitimate interests of the individual addressed in decisions made on behalf of families?
- On the basis of what principles are decisions made when there are competing interests (eg. best interests of the child)?
- Does the policy or program sufficiently reflect the need for information on which family members can choose to exercise their legitimate interests?
- Under what circumstances does the policy or program respect or breach confidentiality?

> ***Even severely discouraged, neglectful families are likely to have actual or potential strengths and resources available to them which can be mobilized for modification of the neglect situation.***
>
> *Philip Popple et al.*
> *School of Social Work*
> *University of Tennessee*

Principle 8

Government policies and programs recognize the value of partnerships with families and with others involved in meeting the needs of families.

Rationale

- Coordination at all levels will enhance communication and effectiveness in working together on behalf of families. This includes families, service providers, professionals, community and government agencies, federal, provincial and municipal governments.
- Partnerships which include the family as an informed, active and voluntary participant in programs and services which affect them are more likely to be on target with their needs.
- The needs of families can be complex and diverse in nature and not likely to be well addressed by any one person or agency.
- Family life can be enhanced through cooperation and the shared responsibilities of families, professionals, community groups, private agencies, employers, volunteers and government.
- Families are better served when there is a coordination of efforts and meaningful involvement by all those who have some role to play in supporting them.

Areas for Consideration

- How does the policy or program take into consideration the importance of partnerships in meeting the needs of families?
- How is the need for coordination at all levels addressed?
- What consideration is given in the policy or program to the role of volunteers, self help, relatives, friends, community agencies, churches, etc?
- How does the policy or program empower communities to meet the needs of families?
- What kind of measures are taken to ensure accountability?
- Are families involved in planning, implementing and evaluating policies and programs? What opportunities are provided for such involvement? What kind of information is given to families to help them fulfil their responsibilities?

> ***Promoting strong families, helping them stay together and cope with challenges and stress are shared responsibilities — a partnership of individuals, families, communities and government in Alberta.***
>
> *The Honourable*
> *W. Helen Hunley*

Glossary

Authority	The power to control, command or act which is defined by position, law or custom.
Autonomy	Capability for independent action.
Collaboration	Two or more stakeholders working together and pooling their expertise and/or resources to achieve or enhance the resolution of matters requiring their mutual contribution.
Coordination	Two or more stakeholders working in harmony toward a common objective while maintaining accountability and responsibility within their separate organizations.
Empowerment	A process by which individuals, families, organizations or communities recognize and enhance their capacity to master their own affairs and gain greater access to and control over resources.
Family Crisis	A family's perception of an event or problem for which regular problem-solving methods or existing resources are seen as inadequate. Events that tend to precipitate family crisis include key times of change in the family life cycle, persistent and lengthy stress, or unexpected events causing a sudden shock to the family leaving it temporarily unable to cope. The same event may precipitate a crisis in one family and not in another. In some families crisis may be an isolated incident and in others it may reflect an ongoing inability to function well.
Family Policy	What government does to and for families in particular those public policies that are explicitly designed to affect the situation of families with children . . . individuals in their family roles . . . and those that have clear consequences for families even though impacts may not have been intended. (Kamerman & Kahn, 1989)

Family Policy Grid	A framework which includes principles, rationale and criteria to apply in assessing the impact of public policies, programs, laws and administrative procedures on families, with the intent of identifying approaches which support and strengthen the well being of families.
Family Ties	Emotional, biological, legal or other bonds between or among family members which may be expressed in a desire for commitment and/or continuity in family relations.
Independence	The ability to fulfil one's own responsibilities and to meet one's own needs. Programs may be specifically designed to help achieve the necessary and desired level of independence or may promote the capacity for it. Independence does not mean isolation.
Interdependence	Mutual dependence and sharing.
Kin Network	Persons related by birth, adoption, marriage or common law relationships who are a potential source of identity, caring, commitment and support for each other.
Partnership	A relationship of two or more individuals or groups who together contribute to accomplishing a common objective within a climate of mutual respect and dignity.
Public Policy	The philosophy, principles and guidelines established by the government which are intended to guide the development and implementation of laws, programs, services and procedures.
Prevention	Actions to reduce or eliminate the occurrence of problems or negative outcomes for people at risk. Prevention usually involves identifying contributing factors and reducing their influences.
Program	A planned set of activities or benefits, designed to meet specific needs.

Promotion	The enhancement and optimization of healthy functioning focusing on the acquisition of required competencies and capabilities.
Responsibility	Taking appropriate actions to fulfil one's socially, morally and/or legally expected role.
Self Sufficiency	The capability of individuals or organizations to supply the skills, knowledge and/or resources necessary to meet their own needs or fulfil their own responsibilities within the context of a supportive environment.
Society	The social and cultural patterns, economic and political systems, and institutions within which people of a particular time and place live and interact.
Well Being	The concept of well being involves a delicate balance among physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social health. Family well being is promoted when members can identify and realize aspirations, satisfy needs, and adapt to a changing environment.

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Appendix A — Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy Terms of Reference

Purpose:

To provide an interdepartmental focus on families in order to facilitate effective planning and program design and delivery across government.

To provide input to the process and outputs for the development and implementation of the Family Policy Grid.

To coordinate intra-departmental input to the development and implementation of the Family Policy Grid.

Responsibilities:

1. **Demographics** – to identify needs for demographic information; provide input and review the results of the data produced and assess implications for family policy.
2. **Principles and Values** – to provide input to and review of the Family Policy Grid which includes principles, rationale and criteria against which to review policies, legislation, programs and administrative procedures in government.
3. **Baseline Data** – to facilitate the ongoing development of profiles of programs and services related to the integrity and functioning of families.
4. **Policy and Program Review** – to establish appropriate internal departmental mechanisms to address communication requirements regarding tasks identified, solicit input and facilitate development of departmental action plans in response to the Family Policy Grid.
5. **Education and Awareness** – to advise on strategies to increase awareness of family policy perspectives in government.
6. **Community Consultation** – to facilitate responsiveness to community issues and concerns reflected in the input received through community consultation.
7. **Policy Oriented Research** – to assist in identifying research needs on family policy issues.

Membership:

*Keith Walls – AADAC
Jean Campbell – ACCESS Network
Gail Babcock – Advanced Education
Shirley Myers – Agriculture
Howard Kushner – Attorney General
*Jeanna Baty – Career Development and Employment
Bert Dyck – Consumer and Corporate Affairs
Ken McLean – Culture and Multiculturalism
Mary Coward – Economic Development and Trade
Merv Thornton – Education
Dan Philips – Energy
Jay Litke – Environment
*Katrine McKenzie – Family and Social Services
Tom Bateman – Forestry, Lands and Wildlife
Cynthia Lowe – Health
*Catarina Versaevel – Interdepartmental Task Force on Seniors
Jack Freebury – Labour
Ken Vincent – Municipal Affairs
Judith Jossa-Stephen – Personnel Administration Office
Jane Simmons – Public Affairs Bureau
Al Benson – Public Works, Supply and Services
*Dave Arsenault – Recreation and Parks
Paulette Rodziewicz – Solicitor General
Neil Murray – Tourism
Diane Earl – Transportation and Utilities
*Stephen Tkachyk – Treasury
Marie Riddle – Women's Secretariat

This committee is chaired by Sally Huemmert, Executive Director, Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families.

*Members of the Interdepartmental Subcommittee on Family Policy formed to assist with the detailed development of the Family Policy Grid.

Appendix B — Academic Review

The Premier's Council appreciates the time and investment given by the following individuals from the academic community who reviewed the Family Policy Grid and provided their input.

Maryanne Doherty – Family Studies, University of Alberta
Joyce K. Engel – School of Nursing, University of Lethbridge
Gregory T. Fouts – Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Calgary
James Frideres – Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Calgary
Joe Hornick – Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family
Dianne Kieren – Associate V.P., Academic, University of Alberta
Kathleen McCall – Family Studies, University of Alberta
Marnie McCall – Faculty of Law, University of Calgary
Jason Montgomery – Family Studies, University of Alberta
Carol Morgaine – Family Studies, University of Alberta
Diane Pask – Faculty of Law, University of Calgary
Rodney Thomlinson – Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
Karl Tomm – Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary
Charles Webber – Faculty of Education, University of Calgary
Margaret A. Winzer – Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge

APPENDIX B

CONTACT LETTER

Maria Mayan
Department of Human Ecology
3-38 Assiniboia Hall
University of Alberta
T6G 3E7

Date

RE: Participation in the Alberta Family Policy Grid Implementation Research

I am a family researcher at the University of Alberta and I am interested in the relationship between government and families and most specifically, government policy-making on behalf of families. My interest deepened in 1992 with the development of the Alberta Family Policy Grid by the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. My understanding is that the Grid is in the process of implementation within our provincial government.

I am interested in learning how you or your department has responded, to date, toward the implementation of the Grid. I am contacting you and others throughout all of the provincial government. It is important that I learn about the range of experiences of Grid implementation: from departments with numerous family programs to departments with few family programs; from people newly or not at all acquainted with the Grid to people who have been aware of the Grid for months/years; and from people who have had both negative and positive experiences with the Grid. I can learn from these numerous perspectives.

This study is part of my doctoral work at the University of Alberta. Your participation in the study may not benefit you directly, but through your participation the study may help others, both inside and outside of the

Alberta government, with the task of policy implementation. Furthermore, the study may benefit families by suggesting ways to improve the policy-making process on behalf of families. I firmly believe in conducting research that is practically relevant to certain individuals and/or groups. After I complete the study, I will provide you with a synopsis of the results that you may find helpful to your future work.

All of the information you provide will be confidential. Access to interview transcripts will be limited to the researcher, the transcriber, and the researcher's committee members. Your name and department will be removed from your transcript and replaced with a number, making it impossible to identify you or your department.

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families has supported this research in principle, but it is important to emphasize that I do not work for the Council, nor for any other body in government, nor for any political party. I am a Ph.D. student learning about the Grid and its implementation as part of my doctoral studies.

I will be contacting you shortly regarding your participation and any comments or questions you may have about the research. At that time I would like to arrange for an interview with you that would be approximately one hour in length. I am most grateful for your time and look forward to speaking with you. If you would like to contact me, my telephone number is 492 - 5771 and my fax number is 492 - 7527.

Sincerely,

Maria Mayan
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Human Ecology
University of Alberta

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: A planned change within government: The implementation of a metapolicy for families

Researcher: Maria Mayan, Ph.D. Candidate, 492 - 5771
Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta

Co-Supervisors: Dr. M. Doherty-Poirier 492 - 3922
Dr. D. K. Kieren 492 - 5770
Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta

Information

The purpose of this research project is to understand the implementation of the Alberta Family Policy Grid. One face-to-face interview, lasting approximately 40 minutes will be conducted by Maria Mayan. One follow-up telephone conversation may be requested if she needs clarification of the information obtained during the interview; this will last no longer than 10 minutes. Interviews will be taped and then transcribed by a research assistant. During the interview, questions will be asked regarding the person's experience implementing the Alberta Family Policy Grid.

Interview transcripts will be confidential. An interview transcript will be given a code, making it impossible to identify a person with her/his department. For example, a transcript will be coded as either 'front line', 'middle management' or 'senior management', according to each person's position within government. The transcript will then be coded as 'low', 'medium' or 'high', according to the level of involvement the department has with families. For example, a transcript may be coded as 'middle/high', meaning a person in a middle management position in a department with a high level of involvement with families. Therefore, personal names and department names will not be used.

Consent

This is to certify that I,

(print name)

hereby agree to participate in the above named project.

I understand that participating in this study may not benefit me directly but the knowledge gained from this study may help others, both inside and outside of the Alberta government, with the task of policy implementation. Furthermore, my participation may benefit families by suggesting ways to improve the policy-making process on behalf of families. There is nothing that I nor Maria Mayan can foresee that would bring harm to myself or others.

I hereby give permission to be interviewed, and for the interview to be tape recorded and transcribed. I understand that my name or other identifying information will not be included on the tape, transcripts, or final report. I understand that my name, address, and telephone number will be kept in a locked drawer, separate from the transcripts and that this information will be destroyed upon completion of the project. I understand that interview transcripts may be kept and utilized for future projects. I understand that the information I provide will only be discussed with Maria Mayan's theses committee members, and will be published in the form of a thesis and journal article. I understand that I will receive a summary of the research results.

I understand that participation in this study is strictly voluntary and I am free to refuse to answer any question and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I know that I may contact Maria Mayan or her co-supervisors if I have any questions, now or in the future.

Participant's Name	Date
Participant' Signature	Researcher's Signature

APPENDIX D

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Alberta Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, (1989). Lieutenant Governor's Conference on the Family: Conceptual Paper. Edmonton: Author. (Confidential Document)

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APPENDIX E

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE STUDY PAPERS

Dr. Susan A. McDaniel	Families today: Change, diversity and challenge
Mary Woodbury	Balancing work and family life
Dr. Lyle Larson	Families and the community
Michael W. Goldstein	Supporting and strengthening families
Dr. F. June Morgan	Learning for living
Humanite Services Planning Ltd. status	Alberta families; Financial health
Dr. Joel Christie	Health and families
Mary Woodbury	Families and the education system
Dr. Jarmilia Horna	Families and leisure
Peter Lown, M. McCall, and Dr. J. Hornick	Families and the law